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Amelia Priestley
4th April 1857

MORAL AND RELIGIOUS POEMS

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MORAL

AND

RELIGIOUS POEMS

BY

FELICIA HEMANS

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS
EDINBURGH AND LONDON
1854

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SCENES AND HYMNS OF LIFE

THE ENGLISH MARTYRS

A SCENE OF THE DAYS OF QUEEN MARY

"Thy face
Is all at once spread over with a calm
More beautiful than sleep, or mirth, or joy:
I am no more disconsolate."—WILSON.

SCENE I.

A Prison.—EDITH *alone.*

EDITH.—Morn once again! Morn in the lone dim cell,
The cavern of the prisoner's fever-dream;
And morn on all the green rejoicing hills,
And the bright waters round the prisoner's home,
Far, far away! Now wakes the early bird,
That in the lime's transparent foliage sings,
Close to my cottage-lattice: he awakes,
To stir the young leaves with his gushing soul,
And to call forth rich answers of delight
From voices buried in a thousand trees,

Through the dim starry hours. Now doth the lake
Darken and flash in rapid interchange
Unto the matin breeze ; and the blue mist
Rolls, like a furling banner, from the brows
Of the forth-gleaming hills and woods that rise
As if new-born. Bright world ! and I am here !
And thou, O thou ! the awakening thought of whom
Was more than dayspring, dearer than the sun,
Herbert ! the very glance of whose clear eye
Made my soul melt away to one pure fount
Of living bounding gladness !—where art thou ?
My friend ! my only and my blessed love !
Herbert, my soul's companion !

(GOMEZ, *a Spanish Priest, enters.*)

GOMEZ.—Daughter, hail !
I bring thee tidings.
EDITH.—Heaven will aid my soul
Calmly to meet whate'er thy lips announce.
GOMEZ.—Nay, lift a song of thanksgiving to heaven,
And bow thy knee down for deliverance won !
Hast thou not prayed for life ? and wouldst thou not
Once more be free ?
EDITH.—Have I not prayed for life ?
I, that am so beloved ! that love again
With such a heart of tendrils ! Heaven ! *thou* know'st
The gushings of my prayer ! And would I not
Once more be free ? I that have been a child
Of breezy hills, a playmate of the fawn
In ancient woodlands from mine infancy !
A watcher of the clouds and of the stars,
Beneath the adoring silence of the night ;
And a glad wanderer with the happy streams,

Whose laughter fills the mountains! Oh, to hear
Their blessed sounds again!

GOMEZ.—Rejoice, rejoice!
Our queen hath pity, maiden, on thy youth;
She wills not thou shouldst perish. I am come
To loose thy bonds.

EDITH.—And shall I see *his* face,
And shall I listen to his voice again,
And lay my head upon his faithful breast,
Weeping there in my gladness? Will this be?
Blessings upon thee, father! My quick heart
Hath deemed thee stern: say, wilt thou not forgive
The wayward child, too long in sunshine reared—
Too long unused to chastening? Wilt thou not?
But Herbert, Herbert! Oh, my soul hath rushed
On a swift gust of sudden joy away,
Forgetting all beside! Speak, father! speak!
Herbert—is he, too, free?

GOMEZ.—His freedom lies
In his own choice—a boon like thine.

EDITH.—Thy words
Fall changed and cold upon my boding heart.
Leave not this dim suspense o'ershadowing me;
Let all be told.

GOMEZ.—The monarchs of the earth
Shower not their mighty gifts without a claim
Unto some token of true vassalage,
Some mark of homage.

EDITH.—Oh! unlike to *Him*
Who freely pours the joy of sunshine forth,
And the bright quickening rain, on those who serve
And those who heed Him not!

GOMEZ (*laying a paper before her.*)—Is it so much

That thine own hand should set the crowning seal
To thy deliverance? Look, thy task is here!
Sign but these words for liberty and life.

EDITH (*examining and then throwing it from her*).—
Sign but these words! and wherefore saidst thou not
"Be but a traitor to God's light within?"
Cruel, oh cruel! thy dark sport hath been
With a young bosom's hope! Farewell, glad life!
Bright opening path to love and home, farewell!
And thou—now leave me with my God alone.

GOMEZ.—Dost thou reject Heaven's mercy?

EDITH.—Heaven's? doth *Heaven*
Woo the free spirit for dishonoured breath
To sell its birthright?—doth *Heaven* set a price
On the clear jewel of unsullied faith,
And the bright calm of conscience? Priest, away!
God hath been with me midst the holiness
Of England's mountains. Not in sport alone
I trod their heath-flowers; but high thoughts rose up
From the broad shadow of the enduring rocks,
And wandered with me into solemn glens,
Where my soul felt the beauty of His word.
I have heard voices of immortal truth
Blent with the everlasting torrent-sounds
That make the deep hills tremble.—Shall I quail?
Shall England's daughter sink? No! He who there
Spoke to my heart in silence and in storm,
Will not forsake His child!

GOMEZ (*turning from her.*)—Then perish! lost
In thine own blindness.

EDITH (*suddenly throwing herself at his feet.*)—
Father! hear me yet!
Oh! if the kindly touch of human love

Hath ever warmed thy breast——
GOMEZ.—Away ! away !
I know not love.
EDITH.—Yet hear ! If thou hast known
The tender sweetness of a mother's voice—
If the true vigil of affection's eye
Hath watched thy childhood—if fond tears have e'er
Been showered upon thy head—if parting words
E'er pierced thy spirit with their tenderness—
Let me but look upon *his* face once more ;
Let me but say—Farewell, my soul's beloved !
And I will bless thee still !
GOMEZ (*aside.*)—Her soul may yield,
Beholding him in fetters ; woman's faith
Will bend to woman's love.
(*To Edith.*) Thy prayer is heard ;
Follow, and I will guide thee to his cell.
EDITH.—O stormy hour of agony and joy !
But I shall see him—I shall hear his voice !
[*They go out.*

SCENE II.

Another part of the Prison.—HERBERT *and* EDITH.

EDITH.—Herbert ! my Herbert ! is it thus we meet ?
HERBERT.—The voice of my own Edith ! Can such joy
Light up this place of death ! And do I feel
Thy breath of love once more upon my cheek,
And the soft floating of thy gleaming hair,
My blessed Edith ? Oh, so pale ! so changed !
My flower, my blighted flower ! thou that wert made

For the kind fostering of sweet summer airs,
How hath the storm been with thee? Lay thy head
On this true breast again, my gentle one!
And tell me all.

EDITH.—Yes! take me to thy heart,
For I am weary, weary! Oh, that heart!
The kind, the brave, the tender!—how my soul
Hath sickened in vain yearnings for the balm
Of rest on that warm heart—full, deep repose!
One draught of dewy stillness after storm!
And God hath pitied me, and I am here—
Yet once before I die.

HERBERT.—They *cannot* slay
One young and meek and beautiful as thou,
My broken lily! Surely the long days
Of the dark cell have been enough for thee!
Oh! thou shalt live and raise thy gracious head
Yet in calm sunshine.

EDITH.—Herbert! I have cast
The snare of proffered mercy from my soul
This very hour. God to the weak hath given
Victory o'er life and death. The tempter's price
Hath been rejected. Herbert, I must die.

HERBERT.—O Edith! Edith! I, that led thee first
From the old path wherein thy fathers trod—
I, that received it as an angel's task
To pour the fresh light on thine ardent soul,
Which drank it as a sunflower—*I* have been
Thy guide to death.

EDITH.—To heaven! my guide to heaven,
My noble and my blessed! Oh, look up!
Be strong, rejoice, my Herbert! But for thee,
How could my spirit have sprung up to God

Through the dark cloud which o'er its vision hung,
The night of fear and error? Thy dear hand
First raised that veil, and show'd the glorious world,
My heritage beyond. Friend! love and friend!
It was as if thou gavest me mine own soul
In those bright days. Yes! a new earth and heaven,
And a new sense for all their splendours born—
These were thy gifts; and shall I not rejoice
To die, upholding their immortal worth,
Even for thy sake? Yes! filled with nobler life
By thy pure love, made holy to the truth,
Lay me upon the altar of thy God,
The first fruits of thy ministry below—
Thy work, thine own!

HERBERT.—My love, my sainted love!
Oh! I can almost yield thee unto heaven;
Earth would but sully thee. Thou must depart,
With the rich crown of thy celestial gifts
Untainted by a breath. And yet, alas!
Edith! what dreams of holy happiness,
Even for this world, were ours!—the low sweet home,
The pastoral dwelling, with its ivied porch,
And lattice gleaming through the leaves—and thou
My life's companion! Thou, beside my hearth,
Sitting with thy meek eyes, or greeting me
Back from brief absence with thy bounding step,
In the green meadow-path, or by my side
Kneeling—thy calm uplifted face to mine,
In the sweet hush of prayer! And now—oh, now!—
How have we loved—how fervently, how long!
And this to be the close!

EDITH.—Oh! bear me up
Against the unutterable tenderness

Of earthly love, my God !—in the sick hour
Of dying human hope, forsake me not !
Herbert, my Herbert ! even from that sweet home
Where it had been too much of Paradise
To dwell with thee—even thence the oppressor's hand
Might soon have torn us ; or the touch of death
Might one day there have left a widowed heart,
Pining alone. We will go hence, beloved !
To the bright country where the wicked cease
From troubling, where the spoiler hath no sway ;
Where no harsh voice of worldliness disturbs
The Sabbath-peace of love. We will go hence
Together, with our wedded souls to heaven ;
No solitary lingering, no cold void,
No dying of the heart ! Our lives have been
Lovely through faithful love, and in our deaths
We will not be divided.

HERBERT.—Oh ! the peace
Of God is lying far within thine eyes—
Far underneath the mist of human tears
Lighting those blue still depths, and sinking thence
On my worn heart ! Now am I girt with strength ;
Now I can bless thee, my true bride for heaven !

EDITH.—And let me bless *thee*, Herbert !—in this hour
Let my soul bless thee with prevailing might.
Oh, thou hast loved me nobly ! Thou didst take
An orphan to thy heart—a thing unprized
And desolate ; and thou didst guard her there,
That lone and lowly creature, as a pearl
Of richest price ; and thou didst fill her soul
With the high gifts of an immortal wealth.
I bless, I bless thee ! Never did thine eye
Look on me but in glistening tenderness,

My gentle Herbert! Never did thy voice
But in affection's deepest music speak
To thy poor Edith! Never was thy heart
Aught but the kindliest sheltering home to mine,
My faithful generous Herbert! Woman's peace
Ne'er on a breast so tender and so true
Reposed before. Alas! thy showering tears
Fall fast upon my cheek. Forgive, forgive!
I should not melt thy noble strength away
In such an hour.

HERBERT.—Sweet Edith, no! my heart
Will fail no more. God bears me up through thee,
And by thy words, and by the heavenly light
Shining around thee, through thy very tears,
Will yet sustain me. Let us call on Him!
Let us kneel down, as we have knelt so oft,
Thy pure cheek touching mine, and call on Him,
The All-pitying One, to aid.

(They kneel.)

Oh, look on us,
Father above!—in tender mercy look
On us, thy children!—through the o'ershadowing cloud
Of sorrow and mortality, send aid—
Save, or we perish! We would pour our lives
Forth as a joyous offering to thy truth;
But we are weak—we, the bruised reeds of earth,
Are swayed by every gust. Forgive, O God!
The blindness of our passionate desires,
The fainting of our hearts, the lingering thoughts
Which cleave to dust. Forgive the strife; accept
The sacrifice, though dim with mortal tears,
From mortal pangs wrung forth. And if our souls,

In all the fervent dreams, the fond excess
Of their long-clasping love, have wandered not,
Holiest! from thee,—oh! take them to thyself,
After the fiery trial—take them home
To dwell in that imperishable bond
Before thee linked for ever. Hear! through Him
Who meekly drank the cup of agony,
Who passed through death to victory, hear and save!
Pity us, Father! we are girt with snares:
Father in Heaven! we have no help but thee.

(*They rise.*)

Is thy soul strengthened, my beloved one?
O Edith! couldst thou lift up thy sweet voice,
And sing me that old solemn-breathing hymn
We loved in happier days—the strain which tells
Of the dread conflict in the olive shade?

(EDITH *sings.*)

HE knelt, the Saviour knelt and prayed,
When but his Father's eye
Looked through the lonely garden-shade
On that dread agony:
The Lord of all above, beneath,
Was bowed with sorrow unto death.

The sun set in a fearful hour,
The stars might well grow dim,
When this mortality had power
So to o'ershadow HIM!
That He who gave man's breath might know
The very depths of human woe.

He proved them all!—the doubt, the strife,
The faint perplexing dread,
The mists that hang o'er parting life,
All gathered round his head;
And the Deliverer knelt to pray—
Yet passed it not, that cup, away!

It passed not—though the stormy wave
Had sunk beneath his tread;
It passed not—though to Him the grave
Had yielded up its dead.
But there was sent Him from on high
A gift of strength for man to die.

And was the Sinless thus beset
With anguish and dismay?
How may *we* meet our conflict yet,
In the dark narrow way!
Thro' Him—thro' Him that path who trod.
Save, or we perish, Son of God!

Hark, hark! the parting signal.

(*Prison attendants enter.*)

Fare thee well!
O thou unutterably loved, farewell!
Let our hearts bow to God!

HERBERT.—One last embrace—
On earth the last! We have eternity
For love's communion yet. Farewell!—farewell!

[*She is led out.*

'Tis o'er!—the bitterness of death is past!

FLOWERS AND MUSIC IN A ROOM OF SICKNESS

"Once when I looked along the laughing earth,
Up the blue heavens, and through the middle air,
Joyfully ringing with the skylark's song,
I wept! and thought how sad for one so young
To bid farewell to so much happiness.
But Christ hath called me from this lower world,
Delightful though it be."—WILSON.

SCENE. — *Apartments in an English country-house* — LILIAN *reclining, as if sleeping, on a couch. Her mother watching beside her. Her sister enters with flowers.*

MOTHER.—Hush! lightly tread! Still tranquilly she sleeps,
As when a babe I rocked her on my heart.
I've watched, suspending even my breath, in fear
To break the heavenly spell. Move silently!
And oh! those flowers! Dear Jessy! bear them hence.
Dost thou forget the passion of quick tears
That shook her trembling frame, when last we brought
The roses to her couch? Dost thou not know
What sudden longings for the woods and hills,
Where once her free steps moved so buoyantly,
These leaves and odours with strange influence wake
In her fast kindled soul?

JESSY.—Oh! she would pine,
Were the wild scents and glowing hues withheld,
Mother! far more than now her spirit yearns
For the blue sky, the singing birds and brooks,
And swell of breathing turf, whose lightsome spring
Their blooms recall.

LILIAN, (*raising herself.*)—Is that my Jessy's voice?
It woke me not, sweet mother! I had lain
Silently, visited by waking dreams,
Yet conscious of thy brooding watchfulness,
Long ere I heard the sound. Hath she brought flowers?
Nay, fear not now thy fond child's waywardness,
My thoughtful mother! In her chastened soul
The passion-coloured images of life,
Which, with their sudden startling flush, awoke
So oft those burning tears, have died away;
And night is there—still, solemn, holy night!
With all her stars, and with the gentle tune
Of many fountains, low and musical,
By day unheard.

MOTHER.—And wherefore *night*, my child?
Thou art a creature all of life and dawn,
And from thy couch of sickness yet shalt rise,
And walk forth with the dayspring.

LILIAN.—Hope it not!
Dream it no more, my mother! There are things
Known but to God, and to the parting soul,
Which feels His thrilling summons.
But my words
Too much o'ershadow those kind loving eyes.
Bring me thy flowers, dear Jessy! Ah! thy step,
Well do I see, hath not alone explored
The garden bowers, but freely visited
Our wilder haunts. This foam-like meadow-sweet
Is from the cool, green, shadowy river-nook,
Where the stream chimes round the old mossy stones
With sounds like childhood's laughter. Is that spot
Lovely as when our glad eyes hailed it first?
Still doth the golden willow bend, and sweep

The clear brown wave with every passing wind?
And through the shallower waters, where they lie
Dimpling in light, do the veined pebbles gleam
Like bedded gems? And the white butterflies,
From shade to sunstreak are they glancing still
Among the poplar boughs?

JESSY.—All, all is there
Which glad midsummer's wealthiest hours can bring;
All, save the *soul* of all, thy lightning smile!
Therefore I stood in sadness midst the leaves,
And caught an under-music of lament
In the stream's voice. But Nature waits thee still,
And for thy coming piles a fairy throne
Of richest moss.

LILIAN.—Alas! it may not be!
My soul hath sent her farewell voicelessly
To all these blessed haunts of song and thought.
Yet not the less I love to look on these,
Their dear memorials. Strew them o'er my couch
Till it grow like a forest-bank in spring,
All flushed with violets and anemones.
Ah! the pale brier-rose! touched so tenderly,
As a pure ocean-shell, with faintest red,
Melting away to pearliness! I know
How its long light festoons o'erarching hung
From the grey rock that rises altar-like,
With its high waving crown of mountain-ash,
Midst the lone grassy dell. And this rich bough
Of honeyed woodbine tells me of the oak,
Whose deep midsummer gloom sleeps heavily,
Shedding a verdurous twilight o'er the face
Of the glade's pool. Methinks I see it now;
I look up through the stirring of its leaves

Unto the intense blue crystal firmament.
The ringdove's wing is flitting o'er my head,
Casting at times a silvery shadow down
Midst the large water-lilies. Beautiful!
How beautiful is all this fair free world
Under God's open sky!

MOTHER.—Thou art o'erwrought
Once more, my child! The dewy trembling light,
Presaging tears, again is in thine eye.
Oh, hush, dear Lilian! turn thee to repose.

LILIAN.—Mother! I cannot. In my soul the thoughts
Burn with too subtle and too swift a fire;
Importunately to my lips they throng,
And with their earthly kindred seek to blend
Ere the veil drop between. When I am gone—
(For I must go)—then the remembered words
Wherein these wild imaginings flow forth,
Will to thy fond heart be as amulets
Hold there, with life and love. And weep not thus,
Mother! dear sister! kindest, gentlest ones!
Be comforted that now I weep no more
For the glad earth and all the golden light
Whence I depart.
No! God hath purified my spirit's eye,
And in the folds of this consummate rose
I read bright prophecies. I see not there,
Dimly and mournfully, the word "*farewell*"
On the rich petals traced. No; in soft veins
And characters of beauty, I can read—
"*Look up, look heavenward!*"
Blessed God of Love!
I thank Thee for these gifts, the precious links
Whereby my spirit unto Thee is drawn!

I thank Thee that the loveliness of earth
Higher than earth can raise me! Are not these
But germs of things unperishing, that bloom
Beside the immortal streams? Shall I not find
The lily of the field, the Saviour's flower,
In the serene and never-moaning air,
And the clear starry light of angel eyes,
A thousand-fold more glorious? Richer far
Will not the violet's dusky purple glow,
When it hath ne'er been pressed to broken hearts,
A record of lost love?

MOTHER.—My Lilian! thou
Surely in *thy* bright life hast little known
Of lost things or of changed!

LILIAN.—Oh! little yet,
For *thou* hast been my shield! But had it been
My lot on this world's billows to be thrown
Without thy love, O mother! there are hearts
So perilously fashioned, that for them
God's touch alone hath gentleness enough
To waken, and not break, their thrilling strings!—
We will not speak of this!
By what strange spell
Is it, that ever, when I gaze on flowers,
I dream of music? Something in their hues,
All melting into coloured harmonies,
Wafts a swift thought of interwoven chords,
Of blended singing-tones, that swell and die
In tenderest falls away. Oh, bring thy harp,
Sister! A gentle heaviness at last
Hath touched mine eyelids: sing to me, and sleep
Will come again.

JESSY.—What wouldst thou hear?—the Italian peasant's lay,

Which makes the desolate Campagna ring
With "*Roma! Roma!*"—or the madrigal
Warbled on moonlit seas of Sicily?
Or the old ditty left by troubadours
To girls of Languedoc?

LILIAN.—Oh, no! not these.

JESSY.—What then? The Moorish melody still known,
Within the Alhambra city?—or those notes
Born of the Alps, which pierce the exile's heart
Even unto death?

LILIAN.—No, sister! nor yet these.
Too much of dreamy love, of faint regret,
Of passionately fond remembrance, breathes
In the caressing sweetness of their tones,
For one who dies. They would but woo me back
To glowing life with their Arcadian sounds—
And vainly, vainly. No! a loftier strain,
A deeper music!—something that may bear
The spirit upon slow yet mighty wings,
Unswayed by gusts of earth; something all filled
With solemn adoration, tearful prayer.
Sing me that antique strain which once I deemed
Almost too sternly simple, too austere
In its grave majesty! I love it now—
Now it seems fraught with holiest power to hush
All billows of the soul, even like His voice
That said of old "Be still!" Sing me that strain,
"The Saviour's Dying Hour."

(JESSY *sings to the Harp.*)

O SON of Man!
In thy last mortal hour
Shadows of earth closed round thee fearfully!

All that on us is laid,
All the deep gloom,
The desolation and the abandonment,
The dark amaze of death—
All upon thee too fell,
Redeemer! Son of Man!

But the keen pang
Wherewith the silver cord
Of earth's affection from the soul is wrung;
The uptearing of those tendrils which have grown
Into the quick strong heart;
This, this—the passion and the agony
Of battling love and death—
Surely was not for thee,
Holy One! Son of God!

Yes, my Redeemer!
Even this cup was thine!
Fond wailing voices called thy spirit back.
Even midst the mighty thoughts
Of that last crowning hour—
Even on thine awful way to victory,
Wildly they called thee back!
And weeping eyes of love
Unto thy heart's deep core
Pierced through the folds of death's mysterious veil.
Sufferer! thou Son of Man!

Mother-tears were mingled
With thy costly blood-drops,
In the shadow of the atoning cross;
And the friend, the faithful,
He that on thy bosom

Thence imbibing heavenly love, had lain—
He, a pale sad watcher,
Met with looks of anguish
All the anguish in thy last meek glance—
Dying Son of Man!

Oh! therefore unto thee,
Thou that hast known all woes
Bound in the girdle of mortality!
Thou that wilt lift the reed
Which storms have bruised,
To thee may sorrow through each conflict cry;
And in that tempest-hour, when love and life
Mysteriously must part,
When tearful eyes
Are passionately bent
To drink earth's last fond meaning from our gaze,
Then, then forsake us not!
Shed on our spirits then
The faith and deep submissiveness of thine!
Thou that didst love—
Thou that didst weep and die—
Thou that didst rise a victor glorified;
Conqueror! thou Son of God!

WOOD WALK AND HYMN

"Move along these shades
In gentleness of heart; with gentle hand
Touch — for there is a spirit in the woods."

SCENE. — *A wood.* — FATHER *and* CHILD.

CHILD.—There are the aspens, with their silvery leaves
Trembling, for ever trembling; though the lime
And chestnut boughs, and those long arching sprays
Of eglantine, hang still, as if the wood
Were all one picture.

FATHER.—Hast thou heard, my boy,
The peasant's legend of that quivering tree?

CHILD.—No, father; doth he say the fairies dance
Amidst the branches?

FATHER.—Oh! a cause more deep,
More solemn far, the rustic doth assign
To the strange restlessness of those wan leaves.
The cross, he deems, the blessed cross, whereon
The meek Redeemer bowed his head to death,
Was framed of aspen wood; and since that hour,
Through all its race the pale tree hath sent down
A thrilling consciousness, a secret awe,
Making them tremulous, when not a breeze
Disturbs the airy thistle-down, or shakes
The light lines of the shining gossamer.

CHILD (*after a pause.*)—Dost thou believe it, father?

FATHER.—Nay, my child.
We walk in clearer light. But yet, even now,
With something of a lingering love, I read

The characters by that mysterious hour
Stamped on the reverential soul of man
In visionary days, and thence thrown back
On the fair forms of nature. Many a sign
Of the great sacrifice which won us heaven,
The woodman and the mountaineer can trace
On rock, on herb, and flower. And be it so!
They do not wisely that, with hurried hand,
Would pluck these salutary fancies forth
From their strong soil within the peasant's breast,
And scatter them—far, far too fast—away
As worthless weeds. O! little do we know
When they have soothed, when saved!
But come, dear boy!
My words grow tinged with thought too deep for thee.
Come—let us search for violets.

CHILD.—Know you not
More of the legends which the woodmen tell
Amidst the trees and flowers?

FATHER.—Wilt thou know more?
Bring, then, the folding leaf with dark-brown stains,
There—by the mossy roots of yon old beach,
Midst the rich tuft of cowslips—see'st thou not?
There is a spray of woodbine from the tree
Just bending o'er it with a wild-bee's weight.

CHILD.—The Arum leaf.

FATHER.—Yes. These deep inwrought marks,
The villager will tell thee (and with voice
Lowered in his true heart's reverent earnestness),
Are the flower's portion from the atoning blood
On Calvary shed. Beneath the cross it grew;
And, in the vase-like hollow of its leaf,
Catching from that dread shower of agony

A few mysterious drops, transmitted thus
Unto the groves and hills their sealing stains—
A heritage, for storm or vernal wind
Never to waft away.
And hast thou seen
The passion-flower? It grows not in the woods,
But midst the bright things brought from other climes.

CHILD.—What! the pale star-shaped flower, with purple streaks,
And light green tendrils?

FATHER.—Thou hast marked it well.
Yes! a pale starry dreamy-looking flower,
As from a land of spirits. To mine eye
Those faint wan petals—colourless, and yet
Not white, but shadowy—with the mystic lines
(As letters of some wizard language gone)
Into their vapour-like transparence wrought,
Bear something of a strange solemnity.
Awfully lovely!—and the Christian's thought
Loves, in their cloudy pencilling, to find
Dread symbols of his Lord's last mortal pangs
Set by God's hand—the coronal of thorns,
The cross, the wounds—with other meanings deep,
Which I will teach thee when we meet again
That flower, the chosen for the martyr's wreath,
The Saviour's holy flower.
But let us pause.
Now have we reached the very inmost heart
Of the old wood. How the green shadows close
Into a rich clear summer darkness round,
A luxury of gloom! Scarce doth one ray,
Even when a soft wind parts the foliage, steal
O'er the bronzed pillars of these deep arcades;

Or if it doth, 'tis with a mellowed hue
Of glow-worm coloured light. Here, in the days
Of pagan visions, would have been a place
For worship of the wood-nymphs. Through these oaks
A small fair gleaming temple might have thrown
The quivering image of its Dorian shafts
On the stream's bosom, or a sculptured form,
Dryad, or fountain-goddess of the gloom,
Have bowed its head o'er that dark crystal down,
Drooping with beauty, as a lily droops
Under bright rain. But we, my child, are here
With God, our God, a Spirit, who requires
Heart-worship, given in spirit and in truth;
And this high knowledge—deep, rich, vast enough
To fill and hallow all the solitude—
Makes consecrated earth where'er we move,
Without the aid of shrines.
What! dost thou feel
The solemn whispering influence of the scene
Oppressing thy young heart, that thou dost draw
More closely to my side, and clasp my hand
Faster in thine! Nay, fear not, gentle child!
'Tis love, not fear, whose vernal breath pervades
The stillness round. Come, sit beside me here,
Where brooding violets mantle this green slope
With dark exuberance; and beneath these plumes
Of wavy fern, look where the cup-moss holds
In its pure crimson goblets, fresh and bright,
The starry dews of morning. Rest awhile,
And let me hear once more the woodland verse
I taught thee late—'twas made for such a scene.

(CHILD *speaks.*)

WOOD HYMN

Broods there some spirit here?
The summer-leaves hang silent as a cloud;
And o'er the pools, all still and darkly clear,
The wild wood-hyacinth with awe seems bowed;
And something of a tender cloistral gloom
Deepens the violet's bloom.

The very light that streams
Through the dim dewy veil of foliage round
Comes tremulous with emerald-tinted gleams—
As if it knew the place were holy ground,
And would not startle, with too bright a burst,
Flowers, all divinely nursed.

Wakes there some spirit here?
A swift wind, fraught with change, comes rushing by;
And leaves and waters, in its wild career,
Shed forth sweet voices—each a mystery.
Surely some awful influence must pervade
These depths of trembling shade!

Yes! lightly, softly move!
There is a power, a presence in the woods;
A viewless being that, with life and love,
Informs the reverential solitudes:
The rich air knows it, and the mossy sod—
Thou—thou art here, my God!

And if with awe we tread
The minster-floor, beneath the storied pane,
And midst the mouldering banners of the dead,

Shall the green voiceful wild seem less thy fane,
Where thou alone hast built?—where arch and roof
Are of thy living woof?

The silence and the sound,
In the lone places, breathe alike of thee;
The temple-twilight of the gloom profound,
The dew-cup of the frail anemone,
The reed by every wandering whisper thrilled—
All, all with thee are filled!

Oh! purify mine eyes,
More and yet more, by love and lowly thought,
Thy presence, holiest One! to recognise
In these majestic aisles which thou hast wrought,
And, midst their sea-like murmurs, teach mine ear
Ever thy voice to hear!

And sanctify my heart
To meet the awful sweetness of that tone
With no faint thrill or self-accusing start,
But a deep joy the heavenly guest to own—
Joy, such as dwelt in Eden's glorious bowers
Ere sin had dimmed the flowers.

Let me not know the change
O'er nature thrown by guilt!—the boding sky,
The hollow leaf-sounds ominous and strange,
The weight wherewith the dark tree-shadows lie!
Father! oh, keep my footsteps pure and free,
To walk the woods with Thee!

BURIAL OF AN EMIGRANT'S CHILD IN THE FORESTS

SCENE. — *The banks of a solitary river in an American forest. A tent under pine-trees in the foreground.* AGNES *sitting before the tent, with a child in her arms apparently sleeping.*

AGNES.—Surely 'tis all a dream—a fever-dream !
The desolation and the agony—
The strange red sunrise, and the gloomy woods,
So terrible with their dark giant boughs,
And the broad lonely river !—all a dream !
And my boy's voice will wake me, with its clear
Wild singing tones, as they were wont to come
Thro' the wreathed sweetbrier at my lattice-panes
In happy, happy England ! Speak to me !
Speak to thy mother, bright one ! she hath watched
All the dread night beside thee, till her brain
Is darkened by swift waves of fantasies,
And her soul faints with longing for thy voice.
Oh ! I *must* wake him with one gentle kiss
On his fair brow !

(*Shudderingly.*)

The strange, damp, thrilling touch !
The marble chill ! Now, now it rushes back—
Now I know all !—dead—*dead !*—a fearful word !
My boy hath left me in the wilderness,
To journey on without the blessed light
In his deep loving eyes. He's gone ! he's gone !

(*Her* HUSBAND *enters.*)

HUSBAND.—Agnes ! my Agnes ! hast thou looked thy last
On our sweet slumberer's face ? The hour is come—
The couch made ready for his last repose.

AGNES.—Not yet ! thou canst not take him from me yet !
If he but left me for a few short days,
This were too brief a gazing time to draw
His angel image into my fond heart,
And fix its beauty there. And now—oh ! now,
Never again the laughter of his eye
Shall send its gladdening summer thro' my soul—
Never on earth again. Yet, yet delay !
Thou canst not take him from me.

HUSBAND.—My beloved !
Is it not God hath taken him ? the God
That took our first-born, o'er whose early grave
Thou didst bow down thy saint-like head, and say,
" His will be done ! "

AGNES.—Oh ! that dear household grave,
Under the turf of England, seemed not half—
Not half so much to part me from my child
As these dark woods. It lay beside our home,
And I could watch the sunshine, through all hours,
Loving and clinging to the grassy spot ;
And I could dress its greensward with fresh flowers,
Familiar meadow-flowers. O'er thee, my babe !
The primrose will not blossom. Oh, that now
Together, by thy fair young sister's side,
We lay midst England's valleys !

HUSBAND.—Dost thou grieve,
Agnes ! that thou hast followed o'er the deep
An exile's fortunes ? If it thus can be,
Then, after many a conflict cheerily met,

My spirit sinks at last.

AGNES.—Forgive ! forgive !
My Edmund, pardon me ! Oh, grief is wild !
Forget its words—quick spray-drops from a fount
Of unknown bitterness. Thou art my home,
Mine only and my blessed one ! Where'er
Thy warm heart beats in its true nobleness,
There is my country ! there my head shall rest,
And throb no more. Oh, still by thy strong love,
Bear up the feeble reed !

(Kneeling with the child in her arms.)

And thou, my God !
Hear my soul's cry from this dread wilderness !
Oh ! hear, and pardon me ! If I have made
This treasure sent from thee, too much the ark
Fraught with mine earthward-clinging happiness,
Forgetting Him who gave, and might resume,
Oh, pardon me !
If nature hath rebelled,
And from thy light turned wilfully away,
Making a midnight of her agony,
When the despairing passion of her clasp
Was from its idol stricken at one touch
Of thine Almighty hand—oh, pardon me !
By thy Son's anguish, pardon ! In the soul
The tempests and the waves will know thy voice—
Father ! say, " Peace, be still !"

(Giving the child to her husband.)

Farewell, my babe !
Go from my bosom now to other rest !
With this last kiss on thine unsullied brow,

And on thy pale calm cheek these contrite tears,
I yield thee to thy Maker!

HUSBAND.—Now, my wife!
Thine own meek holiness beams forth once more
A light upon my path. Now shall I bear
From thy dear arms the slumberer to repose,
With a calm trustful heart.

AGNES.—My Edmund! where—
Where wilt thou lay him?

HUSBAND.—See'st thou where the spire
Of yon dark cypress reddens in the sun
To burning gold?—there—o'er yon willow-tuft?
Under that native desert monument
Lies his lone bed. Our Hubert, since the dawn,
With the grey mosses of the wilderness
Hath lined it closely through; and there breathed forth,
Even from the fulness of his own pure heart,
A wild sad forest hymn—a song of tears,
Which thou wilt learn to love. I heard the boy
Chanting it o'er his solitary task,
As wails a wood-bird to the thrilling leaves,
Perchance unconsciously.

AGNES.—My gentle son!
The affectionate, the gifted! With what joy—
Edmund; rememberest thou?—with what bright joy
His baby brother ever to his arms
Would spring from rosy sleep, and playfully
Hide the rich clusters of his gleaming hair
In that kind youthful breast! Oh! now no more!—
But strengthen me, my God! and melt my heart,
Even to a well-spring of adoring tears,
For many a blessing left.
(*Bending over the child.*) Once more farewell!

Oh, the pale piercing sweetness of that look!
How can it be sustained? Away, away!

(*After a short pause.*)

Edmund! my woman's nature still is weak:
I cannot see thee render dust to dust!
Go thou, my husband! to thy solemn task;
I will rest here, and still my soul with prayer
Till thy return.

HUSBAND.—Then strength be with thy prayer!
Peace on thy bosom! Faith and heavenly hope
Unto thy spirit! Fare thee well a while!
We must be pilgrims of the woods again,
After this mournful hour.

(*He goes out with the child.*—AGNES *kneels in prayer.*—*After a time, voices without are heard singing.*)

FUNERAL HYMN

WHERE the long reeds quiver,
Where the pines make moan,
By the forest-river,
Sleeps our babe alone.
England's field-flowers may not deck his grave,
Cypress-shadows o'er him darkly wave.

Woods unknown receive him,
Midst the mighty wild;
Yet with God we leave him,
Blessed, blessed child!
And our tears gush o'er his lovely dust,
Mournfully, yet still from hearts of trust.

Though his eye hath brightened
Oft our weary way,
And his clear laugh lightened
Half our hearts' dismay;
Still in hope we give back what was given,
Yielding up the beautiful to heaven.

And to her who bore him,
Her who long must weep,
Yet shall Heaven restore him
From his pale sweet sleep!
Those blue eyes of love and peace again
Thro' her soul will shine, undimmed by pain.

Where the long reeds quiver,
Where the pines make moan,
Leave we by the river
Earth to earth alone!
God and Father! may our journeyings on
Lead to where the blessed boy is gone!

From the exile's sorrow,
From the wanderer's dread
Of the night and morrow,
Early brightly fled;
Thou hast called him to a sweeter home
Than our lost one o'er the ocean's foam.

Now let thought behold him,
With his angel look,
Where those arms enfold him,
Which benignly took
Israel's babes to their Good Shepherd's breast,
When His voice their tender meekness blest.

Turn thee now, fond mother!
From thy dead, oh turn!
Linger not, young brother,
Here to dream and mourn:
Only kneel once more around the sod,
Kneel, and bow submissive hearts to God!

PRISONERS' EVENING SERVICE

A SCENE OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

"From their spheres
The stars of human glory are cast down,
Perish the roses and the flowers of kings,
Princes and emperors, and the crown and palms
Of all the mighty, withered and consumed!
Nor is power given to lowliest innocence
Long to protect her own."—WORDSWORTH.

SCENE.—*Prison of the Luxembourg in Paris, during the Reign of Terror.*—D'AUBIGNE, *an aged Royalist*—BLANCHE, *his daughter, a young girl.*

BLANCHE.—What was your doom, my father? In thine arms
I lay unconsciously through that dread hour.
Tell me the sentence! Could our judges look
Without relenting on thy silvery hair?
Was there not mercy, father? Will they not
Restore us to our home?
D'AUBIGNÉ.—Yes, my poor child!
They send us home.
BLANCHE.—Oh! shall we gaze again

On the bright Loire? Will the old hamlet spire,
And the grey turret of our own chateau,
Look forth to greet us through the dusky elms!
Will the kind voices of our villagers,
The loving laughter in their children's eyes,
Welcome us back at last? But how is this!
Father! thy glance is clouded—on thy brow
There sits no joy!

D'AUBIGNÉ.—Upon my brow, dear girl!
There sits, I trust, such deep and solemn peace
As may befit the Christian who receives
And recognises, in submissive awe,
The summons of his God.

BLANCHE.—Thou dost not mean——
No, no! it cannot be! Didst thou not say
They sent us *home?*

D'AUBIGNÉ.—Where is the spirit's home!
Oh! most of all, in these dark evil days,
Where should it be—but in that world serene,
Beyond the sword's reach and the tempest's power—
Where, but in heaven!

BLANCHE.—My father!

D'AUBIGNÉ.—*We must die.*
We must look up to God, and calmly die.
Come to my heart, and weep there! For awhile
Give nature's passion way; then brightly rise
In the still courage of a woman's heart.
Do I not know thee? Do I ask too much
From mine own noble Blanche?

BLANCHE, (*falling on his bosom.*)—Oh! clasp me fast!
Thy trembling child! Hide, hide me in thine arms—
Father!

D'AUBIGNÉ.—Alas! my flower, thou'rt young to go—

Young and so fair! Yet were it worse, methinks,
To leave thee where the gentle and the brave,
The loyal-hearted and the chivalrous,
And they that loved their God, have all been swept
Like the sere leaves away. For them no hearth
Through the wide land was left inviolate,
No altar holy; therefore did they fall,
Rejoicing to depart. The soil is steeped
In noble blood; the temples are gone down;
The voice of prayer is hushed, or fearfully
Muttered, like sounds of guilt. Why, who would live?
Who hath not panted as a dove to flee,
To quit for ever the dishonoured soil,
The burdened air! Our God upon the cross—
Our king upon the scaffold—let us think
Of *these*—and fold endurance to our hearts,
And bravely die!

BLANCHE.—A dark and fearful way!
An evil doom for thy dear honoured head!
O thou, the kind, the gracious! whom all eyes
Blessed as they looked upon! Speak yet again—
Say, will they part us?

D'AUBIGNÉ.—No, my Blanche; in death
We shall not be divided.

BLANCHE.—Thanks to God!
He, by thy glance, will aid me: I shall see
His light before me to the last. And when—
Oh, pardon these weak shrinkings of thy child!—
When shall the hour befall?

D'AUBIGNÉ.—Oh! swiftly now,
And suddenly, with brief dread interval,
Comes down the mortal stroke. But of that hour
As yet I know not. Each low throbbing pulse

Of the quick pendulum may usher in
Eternity!

BLANCHE (*kneeling before him.*)—My father! lay thy hand
On thy poor Blanche's head, and once again
Bless her with thy deep voice of tenderness—
Thus breathing saintly courage through her soul,
Ere we are called.

D'AUBIGNÉ.—If I may speak through tears!—
Well may I may bless thee, fondly, fervently,
Child of my heart!—thou who dost look on me
With thy lost mother's angel eyes of love!
Thou, that hast been a brightness in my path,
A guest of heaven unto my lonely soul,
A stainless lily in my widowed house,
There springing up, with soft light round thee shed,
For immortality! Meek child of God!
I bless thee—He will bless thee! In his love
He calls thee now from this rude stormy world
To thy Redeemer's breast! And thou wilt die
As thou hast lived, my duteous holy Blanche!
In trusting and serene submissiveness,
Humble, yet full of heaven.

BLANCHE (*rising.*)—Now is there strength
Infused through all my spirit. I can rise
And say, "Thy will be done!"

D'AUBIGNÉ (*pointing upwards.*)—See'st thou, my child!
Yon faint light in the west? The signal star
Of our due vesper-service gleaming in
Through the close dungeon-grating! Mournfully
It seems to quiver; yet shall this night pass,
This night alone, without the lifted voice
Of adoration in our narrow cell,
As if unworthy fear or wavering faith

Silenced the strain? No! let it waft to heaven
The prayer, the hope of poor mortality,
In its dark hour once more! And we will sleep,
Yes—calmly sleep, when our last rite is closed.

(They sing together.)

PRISONERS' EVENING SONG.

We see no more in thy pure skies,
How soft, O God! the sunset dies;
How every coloured hill and wood
Seems melting in the golden flood.
Yet by the precious memories won
From bright hours now for ever gone,
Father! o'er all thy works, we know,
Thou still art shedding beauty's glow;
Still touching every cloud and tree
With glory, eloquent of thee;
Still feeding all thy flowers with light,
Though man hath barred it from our sight.
We know thou reign'st, th' Unchanging One, th' All-just!
And bless thee still with free and boundless trust!

We read no more, O God! thy ways
On earth, in these wild evil days.
The red sword in the oppressor's hand
Is ruler of the weeping land;
Fallen are the faithful and the pure,
No shrine is spared, no hearth secure.
Yet, by the deep voice from the past,
Which tells us these things cannot last—
And by the hope which finds no ark
Save in Thy breast, when storms grow dark—

We trust thee! As the sailor knows
That in its place of bright repose
His pole-star burns, though mist and cloud
May veil it with a midnight shroud,
We know thou reign'st, All-holy One, All-just!
And bless thee still with love's own boundless trust.

We feel no more that aid is nigh,
When our faint hearts within us die.
We suffer—and we know our doom
Must be one suffering till the tomb.
Yet by the anguish of thy Son
When his last hour came darkly on;
By his dread cry, the air which rent
In terror of abandonment;
And by his parting word, which rose
Through faith victorious o'er all woes—
We know that thou may'st wound, may'st break
The spirit, but wilt ne'er forsake!
Sad suppliants whom our brethren spurn,
In our deep need to thee we turn!
To whom but thee? All-merciful, All-just!
In life, in death, we yield thee boundless trust!

THE INDIAN'S REVENGE

SCENE IN THE LIFE OF A MORAVIAN MISSIONARY

[CIRCUMSTANCES similar to those on which this scene is founded are recorded in Carne's Narrative of the Moravian Missions in Greenland, and gave rise to the dramatic sketch.]

> "But by my wrongs and by my wrath,
> To-morrow Areouski's breath,
> That fires yon heaven with storms of death,
> Shall light me to the foe!"

SCENE. — *The shore of a Lake surrounded by deep woods. A solitary cabin on its banks, overshadowed by maple and sycamore trees.* HERRMANN, *the missionary, seated alone before the cabin. The hour is evening twilight.*

HERRMANN.—Was that the light from some lone swift canoe
Shooting across the waters? No, a flash
From the night's first quick fire-fly, lost again
In the deep bay of cedars. Not a bark
Is on the wave; no rustle of a breeze
Comes through the forest. In this new strange world,
Oh! how mysterious, how eternal seems
The mighty melancholy of the woods!
The desert's own great spirit, infinite!
Little they know, in mine own fatherland
Along the castled Rhine, or even amidst
The wild Harz mountains, or the sylvan glades
Deep in the Odenwald—they little know
Of what is solitude. In hours like this,

There, from a thousand nooks, the cottage-hearths
Pour forth red light through vine-hung lattices,
To guide the peasant, singing cheerily,
On the home-path; while round his lowly porch,
With eager eyes awaiting his return,
The clustered faces of his children shine
To the clear harvest moon. Be still, fond thoughts!
Melting my spirit's grasp from heavenly hope
By your vain earthward yearnings. O my God!
Draw me still nearer, closer unto thee,
Till all the hollow of these deep desires
May with thyself be filled! Be it enough
At once to gladden and to solemnise
My lonely life, if for thine altar here
In this dread temple of the wilderness,
By prayer and toil and watching, I may win
The offering of one heart, one human heart,
Bleeding, repenting, loving!
Hark! a step,
An Indian tread! I know the stealthy sound:
'Tis on some quest of evil, through the grass
Gliding so serpent-like.

(*He comes forward, and meets an Indian warrior armed.*)

Enonio, is it thou? I see thy form
Tower stately through the dusk, yet scarce mine eye
Discerns thy face.

ENONIO.—My father speaks my name.

HERRMANN.—Are not the hunters from the chase returned?
The night-fires lit? Why is my son abroad?

ENONIO.—The warrior's arrow knows of nobler prey
Than elk or deer. Now let my father leave
The lone path free.

HERRMANN.—The forest way is long
From the red chieftain's home. Rest thee awhile
Beneath my sycamore, and we will speak
Of these things further.
ENONIO.—Tell me not of rest!
My heart is sleepless, and the dark night swift.
I must begone.
HERRMANN (*solemnly.*)—No, warrior! thou must stay!
The Mighty One hath given me power to search
Thy soul with piercing words—and thou must stay
And hear me, and give answer. If thy heart
Be grown thus restless, is it not because
Within its dark folds thou hast mantled up
Some burning thought of ill?
ENONIO (*with sudden impetuosity.*)—How should I rest?
Last night the spirit of my brother came,
An angry shadow in the moonlight streak,
And said "*Avenge me!*" In the clouds this morn
I saw the frowning colour of his blood—
And that, too, had a voice. I lay at noon
Alone beside the sounding waterfall,
And through its thunder-music spake a tone—
A low tone piercing all the roll of waves—
And said "*Avenge me!*" Therefore have I raised
The tomahawk, and strung the bow again,
That I may send the shadow from my couch,
And take the strange sound from the cataract,
And sleep once more.
HERRMANN.—A better path, my son!
Unto the still and dewy land of sleep,
My hand in peace can guide thee—even the way
Thy dying brother trod. Say, didst thou love
That lost one well?

ENONIO.—Know'st thou not we grew up
Even as twin roes amidst the wilderness?
Unto the chase we journeyed in one path;
We stemmed the lake in one canoe; we lay
Beneath one oak to rest. When fever hung
Upon my burning lips, my brother's hand
Was still beneath my head; my brother's robe
Covered my bosom from the chill night air—
Our lives were girdled by one belt of love,
Until he turned him from his fathers' gods.
And then my soul fell from him—then the grass
Grew in the way between our parted homes;
And wheresoe'er I wandered, then it seemed
That all the woods were silent. I went forth—
I journeyed, with my lonely heart, afar,
And so returned: and where was he? The earth
Owned him no more.

HERRMANN.—But thou thyself, since then,
Hast turned thee from the idols of thy tribe,
And, like thy brother, bowed the suppliant knee
To the one God.

ENONIO.—Yes! I have learned to pray
With my white father's words, yet all the more
My heart, that shut against my brother's love,
Hath been within me as an arrowy fire,
Burning my sleep away. In the night-hush,
Midst the strange whispers and dim shadowy things
Of the great forests, I have called aloud,
"Brother! forgive, forgive!" He answered not:
His deep voice, rising from the land of souls,
Cries but "*Avenge me!*" And I go forth now
To slay his murderer, that when next his eyes
Gleam on me mournfully from that pale shore,

I may look up, and meet their glance, and say,
"I *have* avenged thee!"

HERRMANN.—Oh, that human love
Should be the root of this dread bitterness,
Till heaven through all the fevered being pours
Transmuting balsam! Stay, Enonio! stay!
Thy brother calls thee not. The spirit-world,
Where the departed go, sends back to earth
No visitants for evil. 'Tis the might
Of the strong passion, the remorseful grief
At work in thine own breast, which lends the voice
Unto the forest and the cataract,
The angry colour to the clouds of morn,
The shadow to the moonlight. Stay, my son!
Thy brother is at peace. Beside his couch,
When of the murderer's poisoned shaft he died,
I knelt and prayed: he named his Saviour's name,
Meekly, beseechingly; he spoke of thee
In pity and in love.

ENONIO (*hurriedly.*)—Did he not say
My arrow should avenge him?

HERRMANN.—His last words
Were all forgiveness.

ENONIO.—What! and shall the man
Who pierced him with the shaft of treachery,
Walk fearless forth in joy?

HERRMANN.—Was he not once
Thy brother's friend! Oh! trust me, not in joy
He walks the frowning forest. Did keen love,
Too late repentant of its heart estranged,
Wake in thy haunted bosom, with its train
Of sounds and shadows—and shall he escape?
Enonio, dream it not! Our God, the All-just,

Unto himself reserves this royalty—
The secret chastening of the guilty heart,
The fiery touch, the scourge that purifies:
Leave it with him! Yet make it not thy hope:
For that strong heart of thine—oh! listen yet—
Must in its depths o'ercome the very wish
For death or torture to the guilty one,
Ere it can sleep again.

ENONIO.—My father speaks
Of change for man too mighty.

HERRMANN.—I but speak
Of that which hath been, and again must be,
If thou wouldst join thy brother, in the life
Of the bright country where, I well believe,
His soul rejoices. He had known such change:
He died in peace. He, whom his tribe once named
The Avenging Eagle, took to his meek heart,
In its last pangs, the spirit of those words
Which from the Saviour's cross went up to heaven—
"*Forgive them, for they know not what they do!*
Father, forgive!"—And o'er the eternal bounds
Of that celestial kingdom, undefiled,
Where evil may not enter, he, I deem,
Hath to his Master passed. He waits thee there—
For love, we trust, springs heavenward from the grave,
Immortal in its holiness. He calls
His brother to the land of golden light
And ever-living fountains: couldst thou hear
His voice o'er those bright waters, it would say,
"My brother! oh! be pure, be merciful!
That we may meet again."

ENONIO (*hesitating.*)—Can I return
Unto my tribe, and unavenged?

HERRMANN.—To Him,
To Him return, from whom thine erring steps
Have wandered far and long. Return, my son,
To thy Redeemer! Died he not in love—
The sinless, the divine, the Son of God—
Breathing forgiveness midst all agonies?
And we, dare we be ruthless? By his aid
Shalt thou be guided to thy brother's place
Midst the pure spirits. Oh! retrace the way
Back to thy Saviour! he rejects no heart
Even with the dark stains on it, if true tears
Be o'er them showered. Ay! weep, thou Indian chief!
For, by the kindling moonlight, I behold
Thy proud lips working. Weep, relieve thy soul!
Tears will not shame thy manhood, in the hour
Of its great conflict.
ENONIO (*giving up his weapons to* HERRMANN.)—
Father! take the bow,
Keep the sharp arrows till the hunters call
Forth to the chase once more. And let me dwell
A little while, my father! by thy side,
That I may hear the blessed words again—
Like water-brooks amidst the summer hills—
From thy true lips flow forth; for in my heart
The music and the memory of their sound
Too long have died away.
HERRMANN.—Oh, welcome back,
Friend, rescued one! Yes, thou shalt be my guest,
And we will pray beneath my sycamore
Together, morn and eve; and I will spread
Thy couch beside my fire; and sleep at last,
After the visiting of holy thoughts,
With dewy wings shall sink upon thine eyes!

Enter my home, and welcome, welcome back
To peace, to God, thou lost and found again!

(*They go into the cabin together.* — HERRMANN, *lingering for a moment on the threshold, looks up to the starry skies.*)

Father! that from amidst yon glorious worlds
Now look'st on us, thy children! make this hour
Blessed for ever! May it see the birth
Of thine own image in the unfathomed deep
Of an immortal soul,—a thing to name
With reverential thought, a solemn world!
To thee more precious than those thousand stars
Burning on high in thy majestic heaven!

THE PAINTER'S LAST WORK

[SUGGESTED by the closing scene in the life of the painter Blake, which is beautifully related by Allan Cunningham.]

"Clasp me a little longer on the brink
Of life, while I can feel thy dear caress;
And when this heart hath ceased to beat, oh! think,
And let it mitigate thy woe's excess,
That thou hast been to me all tenderness,
And friend to more than human friendship just—
Oh! by that retrospect of happiness,
And by the hope of an immortal trust,
God shall assuage thy pangs when I am laid in dust."—CAMPBELL.

SCENE.—*An English Cottage. The lattice opens upon a Landscape at sunset.*—EUGENE, TERESA.

TERESA.—The fever's hue hath left thy cheek, beloved!
Thine eyes, that make the dayspring in my heart,
Are clear and still once more! Wilt thou look forth?

Now, while the sunset with low streaming light—
The light thou lovest—hath made the elm-wood stems
All burning bronze, the river molten gold.
Wilt thou be raised upon thy couch, to meet
The rich air filled with wandering scents and sounds?
Or shall I lay thy dear, dear head once more
On this true bosom, lulling thee to rest
With our own evening hymn?

EUGENE.—Not now, dear love!
My soul is wakeful—lingering to look forth,
Not on the sun, but thee! Doth the light sleep
On the stream tenderly? and are the stems
Of our own elm-trees by its alchemy
So richly changed? and is the sweetbrier-scent
Floating around? But I have said farewell,
Farewell to earth, Teresa!—not to thee;
Nor yet to our deep love—nor yet awhile
Unto the spirit of mine art, which flows
Back on my soul in mastery. One last work!
And I will shrine my wealth of glowing thoughts,
Clinging affections, and undying hopes,
All, all in that memorial!

TERESA.—Oh, what dream
Is this, mine own Eugene? Waste thou not thus
Thy scarce-returning strength; keep thy rich thoughts
For happier days—they will not melt away
Like passing music from the lute. Dear friend!
Dearest of friends! thou canst win back at will
The glorious visions.

EUGENE.—Yes! the unseen land
Of glorious visions hath sent forth a voice
To call me hence. Oh, be thou not deceived!
Bind to thy heart no earthly hope, Teresa!

I must, must leave thee! Yet be strong, my love!
As thou hast still been gentle.

TERESA.—Oh, Eugene!
What will this dim world be to me, Eugene!
When wanting thy bright soul, the life of all—
My only sunshine! How can I bear on?
How can we part?—we that have loved so well,
With clasping spirits linked so long by grief,
By tears, by prayer?

EUGENE.—Even therefore we can part,
With an immortal trust that such high love
Is not of things to perish.
Let me leave
One record still of its ethereal flame
Brightening through death's cold shadow. Once again
Stand with thy meek hands folded on thy breast,
And eyes half veiled, in thine own soul absorbed,
As in thy watchings ere I sink to sleep;
And I will give the bending flower-like grace
Of that soft form, and the still sweetness throned
On that pale brow, and in that quivering smile
Of voiceless love, a life that shall outlast
Their delicate earthly being. There! thy head
Bowed down with beauty and with tenderness
And lowly thought—even thus—my own Teresa!
Oh! the quick-glancing radiance and bright bloom,
That once around thee hung, have melted now
Into more solemn light—but holier far,
And dearer, and yet lovelier in mine eyes,
Than all that summer flush! For by my couch,
In patient and serene devotedness,
Thou hast made those rich hues and sunny smiles
Thine offering unto me. Oh! I may give

Those pensive lips, that clear Madonna brow,
And the sweet earnestness of that dark eye,
Unto the canvass; I may catch the flow
Of all those drooping locks, and glorify
With a soft halo what is imaged thus;—
But how much rests unbreathed, my faithful one!
What thou hast been to me? This bitter world!
This cold unanswering world, that hath no voice
To greet the gentle spirit, that drives back
All birds of Eden which would sojourn here
A little while—how have I turned away
From its keen soulless air, and in thine heart
Found ever the sweet fountain of response
To quench my thirst for home!
The dear work grows
Beneath my hand,—the last!

TERESA (*falling on his neck in tears.*)—Eugene! Eugene!
Break not my heart with thine excess of love!—
Oh! must I lose thee—thou that hast been still
The tenderest—best?

EUGENE.—Weep, weep not thus, beloved!
Let my true heart o'er thine retain its power
Of soothing to the last! Mine own Teresa!
Take strength from strong affection! Let our souls,
Ere this brief parting, mingle in one strain
Of deep full thanksgiving, for God's rich boon—
Our perfect love! Oh, blessed have we been
In that high gift! Thousands o'er earth may pass,
With hearts unfreshened by the heavenly dew,
Which hath kept ours from withering. Kneel, true wife!
And lay thy hands in mine.

(She kneels beside the couch. He prays.)

Oh, thus receive
Thy children's thanks, Creator! for the love
Which thou hast granted, through all earthly woes
To spread heaven's peace around them, which hath bound
Their spirits to each other and to thee,
With links whereon unkindness ne'er hath breathed
Nor wandering thought. We thank thee, gracious God!
For all its treasured memories, tender cares,
Fond words, bright, bright sustaining looks, unchanged
Through tears and joy. O Father! most of all,
We thank, we bless thee for the priceless trust,
Through thy redeeming Son vouchsafed to those
That love in thee, of union, in thy sight
And in thy heavens, immortal. Hear our prayer!
Take home our fond affections, purified
To spirit-radiance from all earthly stain,
Exalted, solemnised, made fit to dwell,
Father! where all things that are lovely meet,
And all things that are pure—for evermore
With thee and thine!

CATHEDRAL HYMN

"They dreamt not of a perishable home,
Who thus could build. Be mine in hours of fear
Or grovelling thought, to seek a refuge here."—WORDSWORTH.

A DIM and mighty minster of old time!
A temple shadowy with remembrances
Of the majestic past! The very light
Streams with a colouring of heroic days

In every ray, which leads through arch and aisle
A path of dreamy lustre, wandering back
To other years !—and the rich fretted roof,
And the wrought coronals of summer-leaves,
Ivy and vine, and many a sculptured rose—
The tenderest image of mortality—
Binding the slender columns, whose light shafts
Cluster like stems in corn-sheaves ;—all these things
Tell of a race that nobly, fearlessly,
On their heart's worship poured a wealth of love.
Honour be with the dead ! The people kneel
Under the helms of antique chivalry,
And in the crimson gloom from banners thrown,
And midst the forms, in pale proud slumber carved,
Of warriors on their tombs. The people kneel
Where mail-clad chiefs have knelt ; where jewelled crowns
On the flushed brows of conquerors have been set ;
Where the high anthems of old victories
Have made the dust give echoes. Hence, vain thoughts !
Memories of power and pride, which long ago,
Like dim processions of a dream, have sunk
In twilight depths away. Return, my soul !
The Cross recalls thee. Lo ! the blessed Cross !
High o'er the banners and the crests of earth,
Fixed in its meek and still supremacy !
And lo ! the throng of beating human hearts,
With all their secret scrolls of buried grief,
All their full treasures of immortal hope,
Gathered before their God ! Hark ! how the flood
Of the rich organ-harmony bears up
Their voice on its high waves !—a mighty burst,
A forest-sounding music ! Every tone
Which the blasts call forth with their harping wings

From gulfs of tossing foliage, there is blent;
And the old minster—forest-like itself—
With its long avenues of pillared shade,
Seems quivering all with spirit, as that strain
O'erflows its dim recesses, leaving not
One tomb unthrilled by the strong sympathy
Answering the electric notes. Join, join, my soul!
In thine own lowly trembling consciousness,
And thine own solitude, the glorious hymn.

Rise, like an altar-fire!
In solemn joy aspire,
Deepening thy passion still, O choral strain!
On thy strong rushing wind
Bear up from humankind
Thanks and implorings—be they not in vain!

Father, which art on high!
Weak is the melody
Of harp or song to reach thine awful ear,
Unless the heart be there,
Winging the words of prayer
With its own fervent faith or suppliant fear.

Let then thy Spirit brood
Over the multitude—
Be thou amidst them, through that heavenly Guest!
So shall their cry have power
To win from thee a shower
Of healing gifts for every wounded breast.

What griefs that make no sign,
That ask no aid but thine,
Father of Mercies! here before thee swell!

As to the open sky,
All their dark waters lie
To thee revealed, in each close bosom-cell.

The sorrow for the dead,
Mantling its lonely head
From the world's glare, is in thy sight set free;
And the fond aching love,
Thy minister to move
All the wrung spirit, softening it for thee.

And doth not thy dread eye
Behold the agony
In that most hidden chamber of the heart,
Where darkly sits Remorse,
Beside the secret source
Of fearful visions, keeping watch apart?

Yes! here before thy throne
Many—yet each alone—
To thee that terrible unveiling make:
And still small whispers clear
Are startling many an ear,
As if a trumpet bade the dead awake.
How dreadful is this place!
The glory of thy face
Fills it too searchingly for mortal sight.
Where shall the guilty flee?
Over what far-off sea?
What hills, what woods, may shroud him from that light

Not to the cedar-shade
Let his vain flight be made,
Nor the old mountains nor the desert sea;

What but the Cross can yield
The hope, the stay, the shield ;
Thence may the Atoner lead him up to thee !

Be thou, be thou his aid !
Oh, let thy love pervade
The haunted caves of self-accusing thought !
There let the living stone
Be cleft—the seed be sown—
The song of fountains from the silence brought !

So shall thy breath once more
Within the soul restore
Thine own first image—Holiest and Most High !
As a clear lake is filled
With hues of heaven, instilled
Down to the depths of its calm purity.

And if, amidst the throng
Linked by the ascending song,
There are whose thoughts in trembling rapture soar ;
Thanks, Father ! that the power
Of joy, man's early dower,
Thus even midst tears can fervently adore !

Thanks for each gift divine !
Eternal praise be thine,
Blessing and love, O Thou that hearest prayer !
Let the hymn pierce the sky
And let the tombs reply !
For seed, that waits the harvest-time, is there.

PRAYER OF THE LONELY STUDENT

"Soul of our souls! and safeguard of the world!
Sustain—THOU only canst—the sick at heart;
Restore their languid spirits, and recall
Their lost affections unto thee and thine."

NIGHT—holy Night! the time
For mind's free breathings in a purer clime!
Night!—when in happier hour the unveiling sky
Woke all my kindled soul
To meet its revelations, clear and high,
With the strong joy of immortality!
Now hath strange sadness wrapt me, strange and deep;
And my thoughts faint, and shadows o'er them roll,
Even when I deemed them seraph-plumed, to sweep
Far beyond earth's control.

Wherefore is this? I see the stars returning,
Fire after fire in heaven's rich temple burning:
Fast shine they forth—my spirit-friends, my guides,
Bright rulers of my being's inmost tides.
They shine—but faintly, through a quivering haze:
Oh! is the dimness mine which clouds those rays?
They from whose glance my childhood drank delight,
A joy unquestioning, a love intense;
They that, unfolding to more thoughtful sight
The harmony of their magnificence,
Drew silently the worship of my youth
To the grave sweetness on the brow of truth;
Shall they shower blessing, with their beams divine,

Down to the watcher on the stormy sea,
And to the pilgrim toiling for his shrine
Through some wild pass of rocky Apennine,
And to the wanderer lone
On wastes of Afric thrown,
And not to *me*!
Am I a thing forsaken?
And is the gladness taken
From the bright-pinioned nature which hath soared
Through realms by royal eagle ne'er explored,
And, bathing there in streams of fiery light,
Found strength to gaze upon the Infinite?
And now an alien! Wherefore must this be?
How shall I rend the chain?
How drink rich life again
From those pure urns of radiance welling free?
Father of Spirits! let me turn to thee!

Oh! if too much exulting in her dower,
My soul, not yet to lowly thought subdued,
Hath stood without thee on her hill of power—
A fearful and a dazzling solitude!
And therefore from that haughty summit's crown
To dim desertion is by thee cast down;
Behold! thy child submissively hath bowed.
Shine on him through the cloud!

Let the now darkened earth and curtained heaven
Back to his vision with thy face be given!
Bear him on high once more,
But in thy strength to soar,
And wrapt and stilled by that o'ershadowing might,
Forth on the empyreal blaze to look with chastened sight.

Or if it be that, like the ark's lone dove,
My thoughts go forth, and find no resting-place,
No sheltering home of sympathy and love
In the responsive bosoms of my race,
And back return, a darkness and a weight,
Till my unanswered heart grows desolate—
Yet, yet sustain me, Holiest! I am vowed
To solemn service high;
And shall the spirit, for thy tasks endowed,
Sink on the threshold of the sanctuary,
Fainting beneath the burden of the day,
Because no human tone
Unto the altar stone
Of that pure spousal fane inviolate,
Where it should make eternal truth its mate,
May cheer the sacred solitary way?

Oh! be the whisper of thy voice within
Enough to strengthen! Be the hope to win
A more deep-seeing homage for thy name
Far, far beyond the burning dream of fame!
Make me thine only! Let me add but one
To those refulgent steps all undefiled,
Which glorious minds have piled
Through bright self-offering, earnest, childlike, lone,
For mounting to thy throne!
And let my soul, upborne
On wings of inner morn,
Find, in illumined secresy, the sense
Of that blest work, its own high recompense.
The dimness melts away
That on your glory lay,
O ye majestic watchers of the skies!

Through the dissolving veil,
Which made each aspect pale,
Your gladdening fires once more I recognise;
And once again a shower
Of hope and joy and power
Streams on my soul from your immortal eyes.
And if that splendour to my sobered sight
Come tremulous, with more of pensive light—
Something, though beautiful, yet deeply fraught
With more that pierces through each fold of thought
Than I was wont to trace
On heaven's unshadowed face—
Be it even so!—be mine, though set apart
Unto a radiant ministry, yet still
A lowly fearful self-distrusting heart,
Bowed before thee, O Mightiest! whose blest will
All the pure stars rejoicingly fulfil.

THE TRAVELLER'S EVENING SONG

FATHER! guide me! Day declines,
Hollow winds are in the pines;
Darkly waves each giant bough
O'er the sky's last crimson glow:
Hushed is now the convent's bell,
Which erewhile with breezy swell
From the purple mountains bore
Greeting to the sunset-shore.
Now the sailor's vesper-hymn
Dies away.

Father! in the forest dim,
Be my stay!

In the low and shivering thrill
Of the leaves that late hung still;
In the dull and muffled tone
Of the sea-wave's distant moan;
In the deep tints of the sky,
There are signs of tempests nigh.
Ominous, with sullen sound,
Falls the closing dusk around.
Father! through the storm and shade
O'er the wild,
Oh! be Thou the lone one's aid!
Save thy child!

Many a swift and sounding plume
Homewards, through the boding gloom,
O'er my way hath flitted fast
Since the farewell sunbeam passed
From the chestnut's ruddy bark,
And the pools, now lone and dark,
Where the wakening night-winds sigh
Through the long reeds mournfully.
Homeward, homeward, all things haste—
God of might!
Shield the homeless midst the waste!
Be his light!

In his distant cradle-nest,
Now my babe is laid to rest;
Beautiful its slumber seems
With a glow of heavenly dreams—

Beautiful, o'er that bright sleep,
Hang soft eyes of fondness deep,
Where his mother bends to pray
For the loved and far away.
Father! guard that household bower!
Hear that prayer!
Back, through thine all-guiding power,
Lead me there!

Darker, wilder grows the night,
Not a star sends quivering light
Through the massy arch of shade
By the stern old forest made.
Thou! to whose unslumbering eyes
All my pathway open lies,
By thy Son who knew distress
In the lonely wilderness,
Where no roof to that blest head
Shelter gave—
Father! through the time of dread,
Save—oh, save!

EASTER-DAY

IN A MOUNTAIN CHURCHYARD

THERE is a wakening on the mighty hills,
A kindling with the spirit of the morn!
Bright gleams are scattered from the thousand rills,
And a soft visionary hue is born
On the young foliage, worn
By all the embosomed woods—a silvery green,
Made up of spring and dew, harmoniously serene.

And lo! where, floating through a glory, sings
The lark, alone amidst a crystal sky;
Lo! where the darkness of his buoyant wings,
Against a soft and rosy cloud on high,
Trembles with melody;
While the far-echoing solitudes rejoice
To the rich laugh of music in that voice.

But purer light than of the early sun
Is on you cast, O mountains of the earth!
And for your dwellers nobler joy is won
Than the sweet echoes of the skylark's mirth,
By this glad morning's birth;
And gift's more precious by its breath are shed
Than music on the breeze, dew on the violet's head.

Gifts for the soul, from whose illumined eye
O'er nature's face the colouring glory flows;
Gifts from the fount of immortality,
Which, filled with balm, unknown to human woes,
Lay hushed in dark repose,
Till thou, bright dayspring! madest its waves our own,
By thine unsealing of the burial-stone.

Sing, then, with all your choral strains, ye hills!
And let a full victorious tone be given,
By rock and cavern, to the wind which fills
Your urn-like depths with sound! The tomb is riven,
The radiant gate of heaven
Unfolded—and the stern dark shadow cast
By death's o'ersweeping wing, from the earth's bosom past.

And you, ye graves! upon whose turf I stand,
Girt with the slumber of the hamlet's dead,
Time, with a soft and reconciling hand,
The covering mantle of bright moss hath spread
O'er every narrow bed:
But not by time and not by nature sown
Was the celestial seed, whence round you peace hath grown.

Christ hath arisen! Oh, not one cherished head
Hath, midst the flowery sods, been pillowed here
Without a hope, (howe'er the heart hath bled
In its vain yearnings o'er the unconscious bier,)
A hope, upspringing clear
From those majestic tidings of the morn,
Which lit the living way to all of woman born.

Thou hast wept mournfully, O human Love!
Even on this greensward. Night hath heard thy cry,
Heart-stricken one! thy precious dust above—
Night, and the hills, which sent forth no reply
Unto thine agony.
But He who wept like thee, thy Lord, thy guide,
Christ hath arisen: O Love! thy tears shall all be dried.

Dark must have been the gushing of those tears,
Heavy the unsleeping phantom of the tomb
On thine impassioned soul, in elder years,
When, burdened with the mystery of its doom,
Mortality's thick gloom
Hung o'er the sunny world, and with the breath
Of the triumphant rose came blending thoughts of death.

By thee, sad Love! and by thy sister, Fear,
Then was the ideal robe of beauty wrought
To vail that haunting shadow, still too near,
Still ruling secretly the conqueror's thought,
And where the board was fraught
With wine and myrtles in the summer bower,
Felt even when disavowed, a presence and a power.

But that dark night is closed: and o'er the dead,
Here, where the gleamy primrose-tufts have blown,
And where the mountain-heath a couch has spread,
And, settling oft on some grey lettered stone,
The red-breast warbles lone;
And the wild-bee's deep drowsy murmurs pass,
Like a low thrill of harp-strings, through the grass:

Here, midst the chambers of the Christian's sleep,
We o'er death's gulf may look with trusting eye;
For Hope sits dove-like on the gloomy deep,
And the green hills wherein these valleys lie
Seem all one sanctuary
Of holiest thought; nor needs their fresh bright sod,
Urn, wreath, or shrine, for tombs all dedicate to God.

Christ hath arisen! O mountain peaks! attest—
Witness, resounding glen and torrent-wave!
The immortal courage in the human breast
Sprung from that victory: tell how oft the brave
To camp midst rock and cave,
Nerved by those words, their struggling faith have borne,
Planting the Cross on high above the clouds of morn!

The Alps have heard sweet hymnings for to-day—
Ay, and wild sounds of sterner deeper tone
Have thrilled their pines, when those that knelt to pray
Rose up to arm. The pure, high snows have known
A colouring not their own,
But from true hearts, which, by that crimson stain,
Gave token of a trust that called no suffering vain.

Those days are past: the mountains wear no more
The solemn splendour of the martyr's blood;
And may that awful record, as of yore,
Never again be known to field or flood!
Even though the faithful stood,
A noble army in the exulting sight
Of earth and heaven, which bless'd their battle for the right.

But many a martyrdom by hearts unshaken
Is yet borne silently in homes obscure;
And many a bitter cup is meekly taken;
And, for the strength whereby the just and pure
Thus steadfastly endure,
Glory to Him whose victory won that dower!
Him from whose rising stream'd that robe of spirit-power.

Glory to Him! Hope to the suffering breast!
Light to the nations! He hath rolled away
The mists which, gathering into death-like rest,
Between the soul and heaven's calm ether lay:
His love hath made it day
With those that sat in darkness. Earth and sea!
Lift up glad strains for man by truth divine made free!

THE CHILD READING THE BIBLE

"A dancing shape, an image gay,
To haunt, to startle, to waylay;
A being breathing thoughtful breath,
A traveller between life and death."—WORDSWORTH.

I saw him at his sport erewhile,
The bright exulting boy!
Like summer's lightning came the smile
Of his young spirit's joy—
A flash that, wheresoe'er it broke,
To life undreamt-of beauty woke.

His fair locks waved in sunny play
By a clear fountain's side,
Where jewel-coloured pebbles lay
Beneath the shallow tide;
And pearly spray at times would meet
The glancing of his fairy feet.

He twined him wreaths of all spring-flowers,
Which drank that streamlet's dew;
He flung them o'er the wave in showers,
Till, gazing, scarce I knew
Which seemed more pure, or bright, or wild,
The singing fount or laughing child.

To look on all that joy and bloom
Made earth one festal scene,
Where the dull shadow of the tomb
Seemed as it ne'er had been.
How could one image of decay
Steal o'er the dawn of such clear day?

I saw once more that aspect bright:
The boy's meek head was bowed
In silence o'er the Book of Light,
And, like a golden cloud—
The still cloud of a pictured sky—
His locks drooped round it lovingly.

And if my heart had deemed him fair,
When, in the fountain-glade,
A creature of the sky and air,
Almost on wings he played;
Oh! how much holier beauty now
Lit the young human being's brow.

The being born to toil, to die,
To break forth from the tomb
Unto far nobler destiny
Than waits the skylark's plume—
I saw him, in that thoughtful hour,
Win the first knowledge of his dower.

The soul, the awakening soul I saw:
My watching eye could trace
The shadows of its new-born awe
Sweeping o'er that fair face—
As o'er a flower might pass the shade
By some dread angel's pinion made.

The soul, the mother of deep fears,
Of high hopes infinite,
Of glorious dreams, mysterious tears,
Of sleepless inner sight;
Lovely, but solemn, it arose,
Unfolding what no more might close—

The red-leaved tablets, undefiled
  As yet by evil thought.
Oh! little dreamed the brooding child
  Of what within me wrought,
While his young heart first burned and stirred,
And quivered to the eternal word.

And reverently my spirit caught
  The reverence of his gaze—
A sight with dew of blessing fraught
  To hallow after-days;
To make the proud heart meekly wise,
By the sweet faith in those calm eyes.

It seemed as if a temple rose
  Before me brightly there;
And in the depths of its repose
  My soul o'erflowed with prayer,
Feeling a solemn presence nigh—
The power of infant sanctity.

O Father! mould my heart once more
  By thy prevailing breath!
Teach me, oh! teach me to adore
  Even with that pure one's faith—
A faith, all made of love and light,
Child-like, and therefore full of might.

A POET'S DYING HYMN

"Be mute who will, who can,
Yet I will praise thee with impassioned voice!
Me didst thou constitute a priest of thine
In such a temple as we now behold,
Reared for thy presence; therefore am I bound
To worship, here and everywhere."—WORDSWORTH.

THE blue, deep, glorious heavens!—I lift mine eye,
And bless thee, O my God! that I have met
And owned thine image in the majesty
Of their calm temple still!—that, never yet,
There hath thy face been shrouded from my sight
By noontide blaze, or sweeping storm of night,
I bless thee, O my God!

That now still clearer, from their pure expanse,
I see the mercy of thine aspect shine,
Touching death's features with a lovely glance
Of light, serenely, solemnly divine,
And bending to each holy star a ray
As of kind eyes, that woo my soul away,
I bless thee, O my God!

That I have heard thy voice nor been afraid,
In the earth's garden—midst the mountains old,
And the low thrillings of the forest-shade,
And the wild sound of waters uncontrolled,
And upon many a desert plain and shore—
No solitude, for there I felt thee more,—
I bless thee, O my God!

And if thy spirit on thy child hath shed
The gift, the vision of the unsealed eye,
To pierce the mist o'er life's deep meanings spread,
To reach the hidden fountain-urns that lie
Far in man's heart,—if I have kept it free
And pure, a consecration unto thee,
I bless thee, O my God!

If my soul's utterance hath by thee been fraught
With an awakening power,—if thou hast made
Like the winged seed, the breathings of my thought,
And by the swift winds bid them be conveyed
To lands of other lays, and there become
Native as early melodies of home,
I bless thee, O my God!

Not for the brightness of a mortal wreath,
Not for a place midst kingly minstrels dead,
But that, perchance, a faint gale of thy breath,
A still small whisper, in my song hath led
One struggling spirit upwards to thy throne,
Or but one hope, one prayer,—for this alone
I bless thee, O my God!

That I have loved—that I have known the love
Which troubles in the soul the tearful springs,
Yet, with a colouring halo from above,
Tinges and glorifies all earthy things,
Whate'er its anguish or its woe may be,
Still weaving links for intercourse with thee,
I bless thee, O my God!

That by the passion of its deep distress,
And by the o'erflowing of its mighty prayer,
And by the yearning of its tenderness,
Too full for words upon their stream to bear,
I have been drawn still closer to thy shrine,
Wellspring of love, the unfathomed, the divine,
I bless thee, O my God!

That hope hath ne'er my heart or song forsaken,
High hope, which even from mystery, doubt, or dread,
Calmly, rejoicingly, the things hath taken
Whereby its torchlight for the race was fed:
That passing storms have only fanned the fire
Which pierced them still with its triumphal spire,
I bless thee, O my God!

Now art thou calling me in every gale,
Each sound and token of the dying day;
Thou leav'st me not—though early life grows pale,
I am not darkly sinking to decay;
But, hour by hour, my soul's dissolving shroud
Melts off to radiance, as a silvery cloud.
I bless thee, O my God!

And if this earth, with all its choral streams,
And crowning woods, and soft or solemn skies,
And mountain sanctuaries for poet's dreams,
Be lovely still in my departing eyes—
'Tis not that fondly I would linger here,
But that thy foot-prints on its dust appear.
I bless thee, O my God!

And that the tender shadowing I behold,
The tracery veining every leaf and flower,
Of glories cast in more consummate mould,
No longer vassals to the changeful hour;
That life's last roses to my thoughts can bring
Rich visions of imperishable spring,
I bless thee, O my God!

Yes! the young vernal voices in the skies
Woo me not back, but, wandering past mine ear,
Seem heralds of the eternal melodies,
The spirit-music, imperturbed and clear—
The full of soul, yet passionate no more:
Let me, too, joining those pure strains, adore!
I bless thee, O my God!

Now aid, sustain me still. To thee I come—
Make thou my dwelling where thy children are!
And for the hope of that immortal home,
And for thy Son, the bright and morning star,
The sufferer and the victor-king of death,
I bless thee with my glad song's dying breath!
I bless thee, O my God!

THE PRAYER IN THE WILDERNESS

SUGGESTED BY A PICTURE OF CORREGGIO'S

In the deep wilderness unseen she prayed,
The daughter of Jerusalem. Alone
With all the still small whispers of the night,
And with the searching glances of the stars,

And with her God, alone,—she lifted up
Her sweet sad voice, and, trembling o'er her head,
The dark leaves thrilled with prayer—the tearful prayer
Of woman's quenchless yet repentant love.

" FATHER of Spirits, hear !
Look on the inmost heart to thee revealed,
Look on the fountain of the burning tear,
Before thy sight in solitude unsealed !

Hear, Father ! hear, and aid !
If I have loved too well, if I have shed
In my vain fondness, o'er a mortal head,
Gifts on thy shrine, my God ! more fitly laid ;

If I have sought to live
But in *one* light, and made a human eye
The lonely star of mine idolatry,
Thou that art love ! oh, pity and forgive !

Chastened and schooled at last,
No more, no more my struggling spirit burns,
But, fixed on thee, from that wild worship turns.
What have I said !—the deep dream is not past !

Yet hear ! If *still* I love,
Oh, still too fondly !—if, for ever seen,
An earthly image comes my heart between
And thy calm glory, Father ! throned above ;

If still a voice is near,
(Even while I strive these wanderings to control,)
An earthly voice disquieting my soul
With its deep music, too intensely dear ;

O Father! draw to thee
My lost affections back!—the dreaming eyes
Clear from their mist—sustain the heart that dies,
Give the worn soul once more its pinions free!

I must love on, O God!
This bosom must love on!—but let thy breath
Touch and make pure the flame that knows not death,
Bearing it up to heaven—love's own abode!"

Ages and ages past, the wilderness
With its dark cedars, and the thrilling night
With her clear stars, and the mysterious winds
That waft all sound, were conscious of those prayers.
How many such hath woman's bursting heart
Since then, in silence and in darkness breathed,
Like the dim night-flower's odour, up to God?

THE FUNERAL DAY OF SIR WALTER SCOTT

"Many an eye
May wail the dimming of our shining star."—SHAKSPEARE.

A GLORIOUS voice hath ceased!
Mournfully, reverently—the funeral chant
Breathe reverently! There is a dreamy sound,
A hollow murmur of the dying year,
In the deep woods. Let it be wild and sad!

A more Æolian melancholy tone
Than ever wailed o'er bright things perishing!
For that is passing from the darkened land
Which the green summer will not bring us back,
Though all her songs return. The funeral chant
Breathe reverently! They bear the mighty forth,
The kingly ruler in the realms of mind;
They bear him through the household paths, the groves,
Where every tree had music of its own
To his quick ear of knowledge taught by love—
And he is silent! Past the living stream
They bear him now; the stream whose kindly voice,
On alien shores, his true heart burned to hear—
And he is silent! O'er the heathery hills,
Which his own soul had mantled with a light
Richer than autumn's purple, now they move—
And he is silent!—he, whose flexile lips
Were but unsealed, and lo! a thousand forms,
From every pastoral glen and fern-clad height,
In glowing life upsprang,—vassal and chief,
Rider and steed, with shout and bugle peal,
Fast-rushing through the brightly troubled air,
Like the Wild Huntsman's band. And still they live,
To those fair scenes imperishably bound,
And, from the mountain-mist still flashing by,
Startle the wanderer who hath listened there
To the seer's voice—phantoms of coloured thought,
Surviving him who raised. O eloquence!
O power, whose breathings thus could wake the dead!
Who shall wake *thee?* Lord of the buried past!
And art thou *there*—to those dim nations joined,
Thy subject-host so long? The wand is dropped,
The bright lamp broken, which the gifted hand

Touched, and the genii came! Sing reverently
The funeral chant! The mighty is borne home,
And who shall be his mourners? Youth and Age,
For each hath felt his magic—Love and Grief,
For he hath communed with the heart of each.
Yes! the free spirit of humanity
May join the august procession; for to him
Its mysteries have been tributary things,
And all its accents known. From field or wave,
Never was conqueror on his battle-bier,
By the veiled banner and the muffled drum,
And the proud drooping of the crested head,
More nobly followed home. The last abode,
The voiceless dwelling of the bard is reached:
A still, majestic spot, girt solemnly
With all the imploring beauty of decay;
A stately couch midst ruins! meet for him
With his bright fame to rest in, as a king
Of other days, laid lonely with his sword
Beneath his head. Sing reverently the chant
Over the honoured grave! The *grave*—oh, say
Rather the shrine!—an altar for the love,
The light soft pilgrim steps, the votive wreaths
Of years unborn—a place where leaf and flower,
By that which dies not of the sovereign dead,
Shall be made holy things, where every weed
Shall have its portion of the inspiring gift
From buried glory breathed. And now what strain,
Making victorious melody ascend
High above sorrow's dirge, befits the tomb
Where he that swayed the nations thus is laid—
The crowned of men?
A lowly, lowly song.

Lowly and solemn be
Thy children's cry to thee,
Father divine!
A hymn of suppliant breath,
Owning that life and death
Alike are thine!

A spirit on its way,
Sceptred the earth to sway,
From thee was sent:
Now call'st thou back thine own—
Hence is that radiance flown,
To earth but lent.

Watching in breathless awe,
The bright head bowed we saw,
Beneath thy hand;
Filled by one hope, one fear,
Now o'er a brother's bier
Weeping we stand.

How hath he passed!—the lord
Of each deep bosom-chord,
To meet thy sight,
Unmantled and alone,
On thy blest mercy thrown,
O Infinite!

So, from his harvest-home,
Must the tired peasant come;
So, in one trust,
Leader and king must yield
The naked soul revealed
To thee, All Just!

The sword of many a fight—
What then shall be its might?
The lofty lay
That rushed on eagle wing—
What shall its memory bring?
What hope, what stay?

O Father! in that hour,
When earth all succouring power
Shall disavow;
When spear and shield and crown
In faintness are cast down—
Sustain us, Thou!

By Him who bowed to take
The death-cup for our sake,
The thorn, the rod;
From whom the last dismay
Was not to pass away—
Aid us, O God!

Tremblers beside the grave,
We call on thee to save,
Father divine!
Hear, hear our suppliant breath!
Keep us, in life and death,
Thine, only thine!

THE DAY OF FLOWERS

A MOTHER'S WALK WITH HER CHILD

"One spirit—His
Who wore the platted thorn with bleeding brows,
Rules universal nature. Not a flower
But shows some touch, in freckle, freak, or stain,
Of his unrivalled pencil. He inspires
Their balmy odours, and imparts their hues,
And bathes their eyes with nectar.
Happy who walks with Him!"—COWPER.

COME to the woods, my boy!
Come to the streams and bowery dingles forth,
My happy child! The spirit of bright hours
Woos us in every wind; fresh wild-leaf scents,
From thickets where the lonely stock-dove broods,
Enter our lattice; fitful songs of joy
Float in with each soft current of the air.
And we will hear their summons; we will give
One day to flowers and sunshine and glad thoughts,
And thou shalt revel midst free nature's wealth,
And for thy mother twine wild wreaths; while she,
From thy delight, wins to her own fond heart
The vernal ecstasy of childhood back.
Come to the woods, my boy!

What! wouldst thou lead already to the path
Along the copsewood brook? Come, then! In truth
Meet playmate for a child, a blessed child,
Is a glad singing stream, heard or unheard,
Singing its melody of happiness
Amidst the reeds, and bounding in free grace

To that sweet chime. With what a sparkling life
It fills the shadowy dingle! Now the wing
Of some low-skimming swallow shakes bright spray
Forth to the sunshine from its dimpled wave:
Now, from some pool of crystal darkness deep,
The trout springs upward, with a showery gleam
And plashing sound of waters. What swift rings
Of mazy insects o'er the shallow tide
Seem, as they glance, to scatter sparks of light
From burnished films! And mark yon silvery line
Of gossamer, so tremulously hung
Across the narrow current, from the tuft
Of hazels to the hoary poplar's bough!
See, in the air's transparence, how it waves,
Quivering and glistening with each faintest gale,
Yet breaking not—a bridge for fairy shapes—
How delicate, how wondrous!
Yes, my boy!
Well may we make the stream's bright winding vein
Our woodland guide; for He who made the stream
Made it a clue to haunts of loveliness,
For ever deepening. Oh, forget him not,
Dear child! That airy gladness which thou feel'st
Wafting thee after bird and butterfly,
As 'twere a breeze within thee, is not less
His gift, His blessing on thy springtime hours,
Than this rich outward sunshine, mantling all
The leaves and grass and mossy-tinted stones
With summer glory. Stay thy bounding step,
My merry wanderer! Let us rest a while
By this clear pool, where, in the shadow flung
From alder-boughs and osiers o'er its breast,
The soft red of the flowering willow-herb

So vividly is pictured. Seems it not
Even melting to a more transparent glow
In that pure glass? Oh! beautiful are streams!
And, through all ages, human hearts have loved
Their music, still accordant with each mood
Of sadness or of joy. And love hath grown
Into vain worship, which hath left its trace
On sculptured urn and altar, gleaming still
Beneath dim olive-boughs, by many a fount
Of Italy and Greece. But we will take
Our lesson even from erring hearts, which blessed
The river-deities or fountain-nymphs,
For the cool breeze, and for the freshening shade,
And the sweet water's tune. The One Supreme,
The all-sustaining ever-present God,
Who dowered the soul with immortality,
Gave also these delights to cheer on earth
Its fleeting passage. Therefore let us greet
Each wandering flower-scent as a boon from Him,
Each bird-note quivering midst light summer-leaves,
And every rich celestial tint unnamed,
Wherewith transpierced the clouds of morn and eve
Kindle and melt away!
And now, in love,
In grateful thoughts rejoicing, let us bend
Our footsteps onward to the dell of flowers
Around the ruined mansion. Thou, my boy!
Not yet, I deem, hast visited that lorn
But lovely spot, whose loveliness for *thee*
Will wear no shadow of subduing thought—
No colouring from the past. This way our path
Winds through the hazels. Mark how brightly shoots
The dragon-fly along the sunbeam's line,

Crossing the leafy gloom. How full of life,
The life of song and breezes and free wings,
Is all the murmuring shade !—and thine, oh thine !
Of all the brightest and the happiest here,
My blessed child ! my gift of God ! that makest
My heart o'erflow with summer !
Hast thou twined
Thy wreath so soon ! Yet will we loiter not,
Though here the blue-bell wave, and gorgeously
Round the brown twisted roots of yon scathed oak
The heath-flower spread its purple. We must leave
The copse, and through yon broken avenue,
Shadowed by drooping walnut-foliage, reach
The ruin's glade.
And lo ! before us, fair
Yet desolate, amidst the golden day,
It stands, that house of silence ! wedded now
To verdant nature by the o'ermantling growth
Of leaf and tendril, which fond woman's hands
Once loved to train. How the rich wallflower scent
From every niche and mossy cornice floats,
Embalming its decay ! The bee alone
Is murmuring from its casement, whence no more
Shall the sweet eyes of laughing children shine,
Watching some homeward footstep. See ! unbound
From the old fretted stone-work, what thick wreaths
Of jasmine, borne by waste exuberance down,
Trail through the grass their gleaming stars, and load
The air with mournful fragrance—for it speaks
Of life gone hence ; and the faint southern breath
Of myrtle-leaves, from yon forsaken porch,
Startles the soul with sweetness ! Yet rich knots
Of garden-flowers, far wandering and self-sown

Through all the sunny hollow, spread around
A flush of youth and joy, free nature's joy,
Undimmed by human change. How kindly here,
With the low thyme and daisies, they have blent!
And, under arches of wild eglantine,
Drooping from this tall elm, how strangely seems
The frail gum-cistus o'er the turf to snow
Its pearly flower-leaves down! Go, happy boy!
Rove thou at will amidst these roving sweets;
Whilst I, beside this fallen dial-stone,
Under the tall moss-rose tree, long unpruned,
Rest where thick clustering pansies weave around
Their many-tinged mosaic, midst dark grass
Bedded like jewels.

He hath bounded on,
Wild with delight!—the crimson on his cheek
Purer and richer even than that which lies
In this deep-hearted rose-cup. Bright moss-rose!
Though now so lorn, yet surely, gracious tree!
Once thou wert cherished, and by human love
Through many a summer duly visited
For thy bloom-offerings, which o'er festal board
And youthful brow, and even the shaded couch
Of long-secluded sickness, may have shed
A joy, now lost.

Yet shall there still be joy,
Where God hath poured forth beauty, and the voice
Of human love shall still be heard in praise
Over His glorious gifts. O Father! Lord!
The All-beneficent! I bless thy name,
That thou hast mantled the green earth with flowers,
Linking our hearts to nature. By the love
Of their wild blossoms, our young footsteps first

Into her deep recesses are beguiled—
Her minster-cells—dark glen and forest bower,
Where, thrilling with its earliest sense of thee,
Amidst the low religious whisperings
And shivery leaf-sounds of the solitude,
The spirit wakes to worship, and is made
Thy living temple. By the breath of flowers
Thou callest us, from city throngs and cares,
Back to the woods, the birds, the mountain-streams,
That sing of thee;—back to free childhood's heart,
Fresh with the dews of tenderness. Thou bidd'st
The lilies of the field with placid smile
Reprove man's feverish strivings, and infuse
Through his worn soul a more unworldly life,
With their soft holy breath. Thou hast not left
His purer nature, with its fine desires,
Uncared for in this universe of thine!
The glowing rose attests it, the beloved
Of poet-hearts, touched by their fervent dreams
With spiritual light, and made a source
Of heaven-ascending thoughts. Even to faint age
Thou lend'st the vernal bliss: the old man's eye
Falls on the kindling blossoms, and his soul
Remembers youth and love, and hopefully
Turns unto thee, who call'st earth's buried germs
From dust to splendour; as the mortal seed
Shall, at thy summons, from the grave spring up
To put on glory, to be girt with power,
And filled with immortality. Receive
Thanks, blessings, love, for these thy lavish boons,
And, most of all, their heavenward influences,
O Thou that gav'st us flowers!

Return, my boy!

With all thy chaplets and bright bands, return!
See, with how deep a crimson eve hath touched
And glorified the ruin!—glow-worm light
Will twinkle on the dewdrops, ere we reach
Our home again. Come! With thy last sweet prayer
At thy blest mother's knee, to-night shall thanks
Unto our Father in his heaven arise,
For all the gladness, all the beauty shed
O'er one rich day of flowers.

HYMN OF THE TRAVELLER'S HOUSEHOLD ON HIS RETURN

Joy! the lost one is restored!
Sunshine comes to hearth and board,
From the far-off countries old
Of the diamond and red gold.
From the dusky archer-bands,
Roamers of the fiery sands;
From the desert-winds, whose breath
Smites with sudden silent death;
He hath reached his home again,
Where we sing
In thy praise a fervent strain,
God our King!

Mightiest! unto thee he turned
When the noon-day fiercest burned.
When the fountain-springs were far,
And the sounds of Arab war
Swelled upon the sultry blast,

And the sandy columns passed,
Unto thee he cried; and thou,
Merciful! didst hear his vow:
Therefore unto thee again
Joy shall sing
Many a sweet and thankful strain,
God our King!

Thou wert with him on the main,
And the snowy mountain-chain,
And the rivers dark and wide,
Which through Indian forests glide.
Thou didst guard him from the wrath
Of the lion in his path,
And the arrows on the breeze,
And the drooping poison-trees.
Therefore from our household train
Oft shall spring
Unto thee a blessing strain,
God our King!

Thou to his lone watching wife
Hast brought back the light of life;
Thou hast spared his loving child
Home to greet him from the wild.
Though the suns of Eastern skies
On his cheek have set their dyes,
Though long toils and sleepless cares
On his brow have blanched the hairs,
Yet the night of fear is flown—
He is living, and our own!
Brethren, spread his festal board,
Hang his mantle and his sword

With the armour on the wall—
While this long, long silent hall
Joyfully doth hear again
Voice and string
Swell to thee the exulting strain,
God our King!

PRAYER AT SEA AFTER VICTORY

"The land shall never rue,
So England to herself do prove but true."

THROUGH evening's bright repose
A voice of prayer arose,
When the sea-fight was done:
The sons of England knelt
With hearts that now could melt,
For on the wave her battle had been won.

Round their tall ship, the main
Heaved with a dark red stain,
Caught not from sunset's cloud;
While with the tide swept past
Pennon and shivered mast,
Which to the Ocean-Queen that day had bowed.

But free and fair on high,
A native of the sky,
Her streamer met the breeze;
It flowed o'er fearless men,
Though, hushed and child-like then,
Before their God they gathered on the seas.

Oh! did not thoughts of home
O'er each bold spirit come,
As from the land sweet gales?
In every word of prayer
Had not some hearth a share,
Some bower, inviolate midst England's vales?

Yes! bright green spots that lay
In beauty far away,
Hearing no billow's roar,
Safer from touch of spoil,
For that day's fiery toil,
Rose on high hearts that now with love gushed o'er.

A solemn scene and dread!
The victors and the dead,
The breathless burning sky!
And, passing with the race
Of waves that keep no trace,
The wild brief signs of human victory!

A stern yet holy scene!
Billows where strife hath been,
Sinking to awful sleep;
And words, that breathe the sense
Of God's omnipotence,
Making a minster of that silent deep.

Borne through such hours afar,
Thy flag hath been a star,
Where eagle's wings ne'er flew:
England! the unprofaned,
Thou of the earth unstained,
Oh! to the banner and the shrine be true!

A PRAYER OF AFFECTION

Blessings, O Father! shower—
Father of Mercies! round his precious head.
On his lone walks and on his thoughtful hour,
And the pure visions of his midnight bed,
Blessings be shed!

Father! I pray thee not
For earthly treasure to that most beloved—
Fame, fortune, power: oh! be his spirit proved
By these, or by their absence, at thy will!
But let thy peace be wedded to his lot,
Guarding his inner life from touch of ill,
With its dove-pinion still!
Let such a sense of thee,
Thy watching presence, thy sustaining love,
His bosom-guest inalienably be,
That wheresoe'er he move,
A heavenly light serene
Upon his heart and mien
May sit undimmed! a gladness rest his own,
Unspeakable, and to the world unknown!
Such as from childhood's morning land of dreams,
Remembered faintly, gleams—
Faintly remembered, and too swiftly flown.

So let him walk with thee,
Made by thy spirit free;
And when thou call'st him from his mortal place,
To his last hour be still that sweetness given,

That joyful trust! and brightly let him part,
With lamp clear burning and unlingering heart,
Mature to meet in heaven
His Saviour's face!

HYMN OF THE VAUDOIS MOUNTAINEERS IN TIMES OF PERSECUTION.

"Thanks be to God for the mountains."

For the strength of the hills we bless thee,
Our God, our fathers' God!
Thou hast made thy children mighty,
By the touch of the mountain-sod.
Thou hast fixed our ark of refuge
Where the spoiler's foot ne'er trod.
For the strength of the hills we bless thee,
Our God, our fathers' God!

We are watchers of a beacon
Whose light must never die;
We are guardians of an altar
Midst the silence of the sky:
The rocks yield founts of courage,
Struck forth as by thy rod.
For the strength of the hills we bless thee,
Our God, our fathers' God!

For the dark resounding caverns,
Where thy still small voice is heard;

For the strong pines of the forests,
That by thy breath are stirred;
For the storms, on whose free pinions
Thy spirit walks abroad;
For the strength of the hills we bless thee,
Our God, our fathers' God!

The royal eagle darteth
On his quarry from the heights,
And the stag that knows no master,
Seeks there his wild delights;
But we for thy communion
Have sought the mountain-sod.
For the strength of the hills we bless thee,
Our God, our fathers' God!

The banner of the chieftain
Far, far below us waves;
The war-horse of the spearman
Cannot reach our lofty caves.
Thy dark clouds wrap the threshold
Of freedom's last abode;
For the strength of the hills we bless thee,
Our God, our fathers' God!

For the shadow of thy presence,
Round our camp of rock outspread;
For the stern defiles of battle,
Bearing record of our dead;
For the snows and for the torrents,
For the free heart's burial-sod;
For the strength of the hills we bless thee,
Our God, our fathers' God!

MOTHER'S LITANY BY THE SICK-BED OF A CHILD

SAVIOUR! that of woman born,
Mother-sorrow didst not scorn—
Thou, with whose last anguish strove
One dear thought of earthly love—
Hear and aid!

Low he lies, my precious child,
With his spirit wandering wild,
From its gladsome tasks and play
And its bright thoughts far away—
Saviour, aid!

Pain sits heavy on his brow,
Even though slumber seal it now!
Round his lip is quivering strife,
In his hand unquiet life—
Aid! oh, aid!

Saviour! loose the burning chain
From his fevered heart and brain,
Give, oh! give his young soul back
Into its own cloudless track!
Hear and aid!

Thou that saidst, "Awake! arise!"
Even when death had quenched the eyes—
In this hour of grief's deep sighing,
When o'erwearied hope is dying,
Hear and aid!

Yet, oh! make him thine, all thine,
Saviour! whether Death's or mine.
Yet, oh! pour on human love,
Strength, trust, patience, from above.
Hear and aid!

NIGHT HYMN AT SEA

NIGHT sinks on the wave,
Hollow gusts are sighing,
Sea-birds to their cave
Through the gloom are flying.
Oh! should storms come sweeping,
Thou, in heaven unsleeping,
O'er thy children vigil keeping,
Hear, hear, and save!

Stars look o'er the sea,
Few and sad and shrouded;
Faith our light must be;
When all else is clouded.
Thou, whose voice came thrilling,
Wind and billow stilling,
Speak once more, our prayer fulfilling!
Power dwells with thee!

EVENING SONG OF THE WEARY

FATHER of heaven and earth!
I bless thee for the Night,
The soft still Night—
The holy pause of care and mirth,
Of sound and light!

Now, far in glade and dell,
Flower-cup and bud and bell
Have shut around the sleeping woodlark's nest;
The bee's long murmuring toils are done,
And I, the o'erwearied one,
O'erwearied and o'erwrought,
Bless thee, O God! O Father of the opprest!
With my last waking thought,
In the still night!
Yes! ere I sink to rest,
By the fire's dying light,
Thou Lord of earth and heaven!
I bless thee, who hast given
Unto life's fainting travellers the Night—
The soft, still, holy Night.

SONNETS

DEVOTIONAL AND MEMORIAL

THE SACRED HARP

How shall the harp of poesy regain
  That old victorious tone of prophet-years—
  A spell divine o'er guilt's perturbing fears,
And all the hovering shadows of the brain?
Dark evil wings took flight before the strain,
  And showers of holy quiet, with its fall,
  Sank on the soul. Oh! who may now recall
The mighty music's consecrated reign?
Spirit of God! whose glory once o'erhung
  A throne, the ark's dread cherubim between,
  So let thy presence brood, though now unseen,
O'er those two powers by whom the harp is strung,
Feeling and Thought! till the rekindled chords
Give the long-buried tone back to immortal words.

ON A REMEMBERED PICTURE OF CHRIST

AN 'ECCE HOMO,' BY LEONARDO DA VINCI

I MET that image on a mirthful day
Of youth; and, sinking with a stilled surprise,
The pride of life before those holy eyes
In my quick heart died thoughtfully away,
Abashed to mute confession of a sway
Awful, though meek. And now that from the strings
Of my soul's lyre the tempest's mighty wings
Have struck forth tones which then unwakened lay;
Now that, around the deep life of my mind,
Affections, deathless as itself, have twined,—
Oft does the pale bright vision still float by;
But more divinely sweet, and speaking now
Of One whose pity, throned on that sad brow,
Sounded all depths of love, grief, death, humanity!

REPOSE OF A HOLY FAMILY

FROM AN OLD ITALIAN PICTURE

UNDER a palm-tree, by the green old Nile,
  Lulled on his mother's breast the fair child lies,
With dove-like breathings, and a tender smile
  Brooding above the slumber of his eyes;
While, through the stillness of the burning skies,
  Lo! the dread works of Egypt's buried kings,
Temple and pyramid, beyond him rise,
  Regal and still as everlasting things.
Vain pomps! from him, with that pure flowery cheek,
  Soft shadowed by his mother's drooping head,
A new-born spirit, mighty and yet meek,
  O'er the whole world like vernal air shall spread;
And bid all earthly grandeurs cast their crown
Before the suffering and the lowly, down.

TO A FAMILY BIBLE

WHAT household thoughts around thee, as their shrine,
Cling reverently! Of anxious looks beguiled,
My mother's eyes upon thy page divine
Each day were bent; her accents, gravely mild,
Breathed out thy lore; whilst I, a dreamy child,
Wandered on breeze-like fancies oft away,
To some lone tuft of gleaming spring-flowers wild,
Some fresh-discovered nook for woodland play,
Some secret nest. Yet would the solemn Word,
At times, with kindlings of young wonder heard,
Fall on thy wakened spirit, there to be
A seed not lost,—for which, in darker years,
O Book of Heaven! I pour, with grateful tears,
Heart-blessings on the holy dead and thee!

A CHURCH IN NORTH WALES

BLESSINGS be round it still, that gleaming fane,
Low in its mountain-glen! Old mossy trees
Mellow the sunshine through the untinted pane:
And oft, borne in upon some fitful breeze,
The deep sound of the ever-pealing seas,
Filling the hollows with its anthem-tone,
There meets the voice of psalms. Yet not alone
For memories lulling to the heart as these,
I bless thee, midst thy rocks, grey house of prayer!
But for their sakes who unto thee repair
From the hill cabins and the ocean-shore.
Oh! may the fisher and the mountaineer
Words to sustain earth's toiling children hear
Within thy lowly walls for evermore!

THE CHILDREN WHOM JESUS BLESSED

HAPPY were they, the mothers, in whose sight
Ye grew, fair children! hallowed from that hour
By your Lord's blessing. Surely thence a shower
Of heavenly beauty, a transmitted light,
Hung on your brows and eyelids, meekly bright,
Through all the after-years which saw ye move
Lowly, yet still majestic, in the might,
The conscious glory of the Saviour's love!
And honoured be all childhood, for the sake
Of that high love! Let reverential care
Watch to behold the immortal spirit wake,
And shield its first bloom from unholy air:
Owning, in each young suppliant glance, the sign
Of claims upon a heritage divine.

THE OLIVE TREE

THE palm, the vine, the cedar—each hath power
To bid fair Oriental shapes glance by;
And each quick glistening of the laurel bower
Wafts Grecian images o'er fancy's eye.
But thou, pale Olive! in thy branches lie
Far deeper spells than prophet-grove of old
Might e'er enshrine. I could not hear thee sigh
To the wind's faintest whisper, nor behold
One shiver of thy leaves' dim silvery green,
Without high thoughts and solemn, of that scene
When in the garden the Redeemer prayed—
When pale stars looked upon his fainting head,
And angels, ministering in silent dread,
Trembled perchance within thy trembling shade.

THE DARKNESS OF THE CRUCIFIXION

On Judah's hills a weight of darkness hung,
Felt shudderingly at noon: the land had driven
A Guest divine back to the gates of heaven;
A life, whence all pure founts of healing sprung,
All grace, all truth. And when, to anguish wrung,
From the sharp Cross the enlightening spirit fled,
O'er the forsaken earth a pall of dread
By the great shadow of that death was flung.
O Saviour! O Atoner! thou that fain
Wouldst make thy temple in each human heart,
Leave not such darkness in my soul to reign;
Ne'er may thy presence from its depths depart,
Chased thence by guilt! Oh! turn not thou away,
The bright and Morning Star, my guide to perfect day!

OLD CHURCH IN AN ENGLISH PARK

CROWNING a flowery slope, it stood alone
In gracious sanctity. A bright rill wound
Caressingly about the holy ground,
And warbled with a never-dying tone
Amidst the tombs. A hue of ages gone
Seemed from that ivied porch, that solemn gleam
Of tower and cross, pale-quivering on the stream,
O'er all the ancestral woodlands to be thrown;—
And something yet more deep. The air was fraught
With noble memories, whispering many a thought
Of England's fathers. Loftily serene,
They that had toiled, watched, struggled to secure
Within such fabrics worship free and pure,
Reigned there, the o'ershadowing spirit of the scene.

THE LILIES OF THE FIELD

"Consider the lilies of the field"

FLOWERS! when the Saviour's calm benignant eye
Fell on your gentle beauty—when from you
That heavenly lesson for all hearts he drew,
Eternal, universal as the sky,—
Then in the bosom of your purity
A voice He set as in a temple-shrine,
That life's quick travellers ne'er might pass you by
Unwarned of that sweet oracle divine.
And though too oft its low celestial sound
By the harsh notes of work-day care is drowned,
And the loud steps of vain unlistening haste,
Yet the great ocean hath no tone of power
Mightier to reach the soul, in thought's hushed hour,
Than yours, ye Lilies! chosen thus and graced.

THE BIRDS OF THE AIR

"And behold the birds of the air"

Ye too, the free and fearless birds of air,
Were charged, that hour, on missionary wing
The same bright lesson o'er the seas to bear,
Heaven-guided wanderers, with the winds of spring,
Sing on, before the storm and after, sing!
And call us to your echoing woods away
From worldly cares: and bid our spirits bring
Faith to imbibe deep wisdom from your lay.
So may those blessed vernal strains renew
Childhood, a childhood yet more pure and true
Even than the first, within the awakened mind;
While sweetly, joyously they tell of life
That knows no doubts, no questionings, no strife,
But hangs upon its God, unconsciously resigned.

MOUNTAIN SANCTUARIES

He went up to a mountain apart to pray"

A CHILD midst ancient mountains I have stood,
Where the wild falcons make their lordly nest
On high. The spirit of the solitude
Fell solemnly upon my infant breast,
Though then I pray'd not; but deep thoughts have press'd
Into my being since it breathed that air,
Nor could I now one moment live the guest
Of such dread scenes, without the springs of prayer
O'erflowing all my soul. No minsters rise
Like them in pure communion with the skies,
Vast, silent, open unto night and day.
So might the o'erburdened Son of Man have felt,
When, turning where inviolate stillness dwelt,
He sought high mountains, there apart to pray.

PLACES OF WORSHIP

"God is a Spirit"

SPIRIT! whose life-sustaining presence fills
Air, ocean, central depths by man untried,
Thou for thy worshippers hast sanctified
All place, all time! The silence of the hills
Breathes veneration,—founts and coral rills
Of thee are murmuring,—to its inmost glade
The living forest with thy whisper thrills,
And there is holiness in every shade.
Yet must the thoughtful soul of man invest
With dearer consecration those pure fanes,
Which, severed from all sound of earth's unrest,
Hear naught but suppliant or adoring strains
Rise heavenward. No'er may rock or cave possess
Their claim on human hearts to solemn tenderness.

THE RAISING OF THE WIDOW'S SON

"And he that was dead sat up and began to speak"

He that was dead rose up and spoke. He spoke!
Was it of that majestic world unknown?
Those words which first the bier's dread silence broke,
Came they with revelation in each tone?
Were the far cities of the nations gone,
The solemn halls of consciousness or sleep,
For man uncurtained by that spirit lone,
Back from their portal summoned o'er the deep?
Be hushed, my soul! the veil of darkness lay
Still drawn: thy Lord called back the voice departed
To spread His truth, to comfort His weak-hearted,
Not to reveal the mysteries of its way.
Oh! take that lesson home in silent faith:
Put on submissive strength to meet, not question, death!

PICTURE OF THE INFANT CHRIST WITH FLOWERS

ALL the bright hues from Eastern garlands glowing,
Round the young child luxuriantly are spread;
Gifts, fairer far than Magian kings', bestowing
In adoration, o'er his cradle shed.
Roses, deep filled with rich midsummer's red,
Circle his hands: but in his grave sweet eye,
Thought seems even now to wake, and prophesy
Of ruder coronals for that meek head.
And thus it was: a diadem of thorn
Earth gave to Him who mantled her with flowers;
To Him who poured forth blessings in soft showers
O'er all her paths, a cup of bitter scorn.
And *we* repine, for whom that cup He took,
O'er blooms that mock'd our hope, o'er idols that forsook!

LOUISE SCHEPLER

[LOUISE SCHEPLER was the faithful servant and friend of the pastor Oberlin. The last letter addressed by him to his children for their perusal after his decease, affectingly commemorates her unwearied zeal in visiting and instructing the children of the mountain hamlets, through all seasons, and in all circumstances of difficulty and danger.]

A FEARLESS journeyer o'er the mountain-snow
Wert thou, Louise! The sun's decaying light
Oft, with its latest melancholy glow,
Reddened thy steep wild way: the starry night
Oft met thee crossing some lone eagle's height,
Piercing some dark ravine: and many a dell
Knew through its ancient rock-recesses well
Thy gentle presence, which hath made them bright
Oft in mid-storms—oh! not with beauty's eye,
Nor the proud glance of genius keenly burning.
No, pilgrim of unwearying charity!
Thy spell was *love*—the mountain-deserts turning
To blessed realms, where stream and rock rejoice
When the glad human soul lifts a thanksgiving voice.

TO THE SAME

For thou, a holy shepherdess and kind,
Through the pine forests, by the upland rills,
Didst roam to seek the children of the hills,
A wild neglected flock! to seek, and find,
And meekly win; there feeding each young mind
With balms of heavenly eloquence: not thine,
Daughter of Christ! but His, whose love divine
Its own clear spirit in thy breast had shrined,
A burning light. Oh! beautiful, in truth,
Upon the mountains are the feet of those
Who bear His tidings! From thy morn of youth,
For this were all thy journeyings; and the close
Of that long path, heaven's own bright Sabbath-rest,
Must wait thee, wanderer! on thy Saviour's breast.

FEMALE CHARACTERS OF SCRIPTURE

INVOCATION

"Your tents are desolate; your stately steps,
Of all their choral dances, have not left
One trace beside the fountains: your full cup
Of gladness and of trembling, each alike
Is broken. Yet, amidst undying things,
The mind still keeps your loveliness, and still
All the fresh glories of the early world
Hang round you in the spirit's pictured halls,
Never to change!"

As the tired voyager on stormy seas
  Invokes the coming of bright birds from shore,
To waft him tidings, with the gentler breeze,
  Of dim sweet woods that hear no billows roar—
  So, from the depth of days, when earth yet wore
Her solemn beauty and primeval dew,
  I call you, gracious Forms! Oh, come! restore
Awhile that holy freshness, and renew
  Life's morning dreams. Come with the voice, the lyre,
Daughters of Judah! with the timbrel rise!
Ye of the dark prophetic Eastern eyes,
  Imperial in their visionary fire;
Oh! steep my soul in that old glorious time,
When God's own whisper shook the cedars of your clime.

INVOCATION CONTINUED

And come, ye faithful! round Messiah seen,
With a soft harmony of tears and light
Streaming through all your spiritual mien—
As in calm clouds of pearly stillness bright,
Showers weave with sunshine, and transpierce their slight
Ethereal cradle. From your heart subdued
All haughty dreams of power had winged their flight,
And left high place for martyr fortitude,
True faith, long-suffering love. Come to me, come!
And as the seas, beneath your Master's tread,
Fell into crystal smoothness, round him spread
Like the clear pavement of His heavenly home;
So, in your presence, let the soul's great deep
Sink to the gentleness of infant sleep.

THE SONG OF MIRIAM

A song for Israel's God! Spear, crest, and helm
  Lay by the billows of the old Red Sea,
When Miriam's voice o'er that sepulchral realm
  Sent on the blast a hymn of jubilee.
  With her lit eye and long hair floating free,
Queen-like she stood, and glorious was the strain,
  Even as instinct with the tempestuous glee
Of the dark waters tossing o'er the slain.
A song for God's own victory! Oh, thy lays,
  Bright poesy! were holy in their birth:
How hath it died, thy seraph-note of praise,
  In the bewildering melodies of earth!
Return from troubling, bitter founts—return
Back to the life-springs of thy native urn!

RUTH

THE plume-like swaying of the auburn corn,
By soft winds to a dreamy motion fanned,
Still brings me back thine image—O forlorn,
Yet not forsaken Ruth! I see thee stand
Lone, midst the gladness of the harvest-band—
Lone, as a wood-bird on the ocean's foam
Fallen in its weariness. Thy fatherland
Smiles far away! yet to the sense of home—
That finest, purest, which can recognise
Home in affection's glance—for ever true
Beats thy calm heart. And if thy gentle eyes
Gleam tremulous through tears, 'tis not to rue
Those words, immortal in their deep love's tone—
Thy people and thy God shall be mine own!

THE ANNUNCIATION

Lowliest of women, and most glorified!
In thy still beauty sitting calm and lone,
A brightness round thee grew—and by thy side,
Kindling the air, a form ethereal shone,
Solemn, yet breathing gladness. From her throne
A queen had risen with more imperial eye,
A stately prophetess of victory
From her proud lyre had struck a tempest's tone,
For such high tidings as to thee were brought,
Chosen of heaven! that hour. But thou, oh! thou,
Even as a flower with gracious rains o'erfraught,
Thy virgin head beneath its crown didst bow,
And take to thy meek breast the all-holy word,
And own thyself the handmaid of the Lord.

THE SONG OF THE VIRGIN

YET as a sunburst flushing mountain-snow,
Fell the celestial touch of fire ere long
On the pale stillness of thy thoughtful brow,
And thy calm spirit lightened into song.
Unconsciously, perchance, yet free and strong
Flowed the majestic joy of tuneful words,
Which living harps the choirs of heaven among
Might well have linked with their divinest chords.
Full many a strain, borne far on glory's blast,
Shall leave, where once its haughty music passed,
No more to memory than a reed's faint sigh;
While thine, O childlike Virgin! through all time
Shall send its fervent breath o'er every clime,
Being of God, and therefore not to die.

MARY AT THE FEET OF CHRIST

Oh ! blest beyond all daughters of the earth !
What were the Orient's thrones to that low seat
Where thy hushed spirit drew celestial birth,
Mary ! meek listener at the Saviour's feet?
No feverish cares to that divine retreat
Thy woman's heart of silent worship brought,
But a fresh childhood, heavenly truth to meet
With love and wonder, and submissive thought.
Oh ! For the holy quiet of thy breast,
Midst the world's eager tones and footsteps flying—
Thou, whose calm soul was like a wellspring lying
So deep and still in its transparent rest,
That even when noontide burns upon the hills,
Some one bright solemn star all its lone mirror fills.

MARY MAGDALENE AT THE SEPULCHRE

WEEPER! to thee how bright a morn was given
After thy long, long vigil of despair,
When that high voice which burial rocks had riven
Thrilled with immortal tones the silent air!
Never did clarion's royal blast declare
Such tale of victory to a breathless crowd,
As the deep sweetness of one word could bear
Into thy heart of hearts, O woman! bowed
By strong affection's anguish! One low word—
"*Mary!*" and all the triumph wrung from death
Was thus revealed; and thou, that so hadst erred,
So wept, and been forgiven, in trembling faith
Didst cast thee down before the all-conquering Son,
Awed by the mighty gift thy tears and love had won.

THE SISTERS OF BETHANY AFTER THE DEATH OF LAZARUS

One grief, one faith, O sisters of the dead!
Was in your bosoms,—thou whose steps, made fleet
By keen hope fluttering in the heart which bled,
Bore thee as wings the Lord of Life to greet;
And thou that duteous in thy still retreat
Didst wait his summons, then with reverent love
Fall weeping at the blest Deliverer's feet,
Whom even to heavenly tears thy woe could move.
And which to Him, the All-seeing and All-just,
Was loveliest—that quick zeal, or lowly trust?
Oh! question not, and let no law be given
To those unveilings of its deepest shrine
By the wrung spirit made in outward sign.
Free service from the heart is all in all to heaven.

THE PENITENT ANOINTING CHRIST'S FEET

THERE was a mournfulness in angel eyes,
That saw thee, woman! bright in this world's train,
Moving to pleasure's airy melodies,
Thyself the idol of the enchanted strain.
But from thy beauty's garland, brief and vain,
When one by one the rose-leaves had been torn;
When thy heart's core had quivered to the pain
Through every life-nerve sent by arrowy scorn;
When thou didst kneel to pour sweet odours forth
On the Redeemer's feet, with many a sigh
And showering tear-drop, of yet richer worth
Than all those costly balms of Araby;
Then was there joy, a song of joy in heaven,
For thee, the child won back, the penitent forgiven!

THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM AT THE CROSS

LIKE those pale stars of tempest-hours, whose gleam
  Waves calm and constant on the rocking mast,
Such by the Cross doth your bright lingering seem,
  Daughters of Zion! faithful to the last!
  Ye, through the darkness o'er the wide earth cast
By the death-cloud within the Saviour's eye,
  Even till away the heavenly spirit passed,
Stood in the shadow of his agony.
O blessèd faith! a guiding lamp that hour
Was lit for woman's heart! To her, whose dower
  Is all of love and suffering from her birth,
Still has your act a voice—through fear, through strife,
Bidding her bind each tendril of her life
  To that which her deep soul has proved of holiest worth.

MARY MAGDALENE BEARING TIDINGS OF THE RESURRECTION

THEN was a task of glory all thine own,
Nobler than o'er the still small voice assigned
To lips in awful music making known
The stormy splendours of some prophet's mind.
Christ is arisen! By thee, to wake mankind,
First from the sepulchre those words were brought:
Thou wert to send the mighty rushing wind
First on its way, with those high tidings fraught—
Christ is arisen! Thou, thou, the sin-enthralled!
Earth's outcast, heaven's own ransom'd one, wert called
In human hearts to give that rapture birth.
O raised from shame to brightness! *there* doth lie
The tenderest meaning of His ministry,
Whose undespairing love still owned the spirit's worth.

THE MEMORIAL OF MARY

"Verily I say unto you. Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this that this woman hath done be told for a memorial of her."—MATTHEW, XXVI. 13. See also JOHN, xii. 3.

THOU hast thy record in the monarch's hall,
And on the waters of the far mid sea;
And where the mighty mountain-shadows fall,
The Alpine hamlet keeps a thought of thee:
Where'er, beneath some Oriental tree,
The Christian traveller rests—where'er the child
Looks upward from the English mother's knee,
With earnest eyes in wondering reverence mild,
There art thou known—where'er the Book of light
Bears hope and healing, there, beyond all blight,
Is borne thy memory, and all praise above.
Oh! say what deed so lifted thy sweet name,
Mary! to that pure, silent place of fame?
One lowly offering of exceeding love.

THE VIGIL OF RIZPAH

"And Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took sackcloth, and spread it for her upon the rock, from the beginning of harvest until water dropped upon them out of heaven, and suffered neither the birds of the air to rest on them by day, nor the beasts of the field by night."—2 Sam. xxi. 10.

Who watches on the mountain with the dead,
Alone before the awfulness of night?
A seer awaiting the deep spirit's might?
A warrior guarding some dark pass of dread?
No—a lorn woman! On her drooping head,
Once proudly graceful, heavy beats the rain;
She recks not—living for the unburied slain,
Only to scare the vulture from their bed.
So, night by night, her vigil hath she kept
With the pale stars, and with the dews hath wept:
Oh! surely some bright presence from above
On those wild rocks the lonely one must aid!
Even so; a strengthener through all storm and shade,
The unconquerable angel, mightiest love!

THE REPLY OF THE SHUNAMITE WOMAN

"And she answered, I dwell among mine own people"

"I DWELL among mine own." Oh, happy thou!
Not for the sunny clusters of the vine,
Not for the olives on the mountain's brow,
Nor the flocks wandering by the flowery line
Of streams, that make the green land where they shine
Laugh to the light of waters: not for these,
Nor the soft shadow of ancestral trees,
Whose kindly whisper floats o'er thee and thine—
Oh! not for these I call thee richly blest;
But for the meekness of thy woman's breast,
Where that sweet depth of still contentment lies,
And for thy holy household love, which clings
Unto all ancient and familiar things,
Weaving from each some link for home's dear charities.

RECORDS OF THE SPRING OF 1834

A VERNAL THOUGHT

O FESTAL Spring! midst thy victorious glow,
  Far-spreading o'er the kindled woods and plains,
  And streams that bound to meet thee from their chains,
Well might there lurk the shadow of a woe
For human hearts, and in the exulting flow
  Of thy rich songs a melancholy tone,
  Were we of mould all earthly—we alone,
Severed from thy great spell, and doomed to go
Farther, still farther, from our sunny time,
Never to feel the breathings of our prime,
  Never to flower again! But we, O spring!
Cheered by deep spirit-whispers not of earth,
Press to the regions of thy heavenly birth,
  As here thy flowers and birds press on to bloom and sing.

THE RIVER CLWYD IN NORTH WALES

O CAMBRIAN river! with slow music gliding
By pastoral hills, old woods, and ruined towers;
Now midst thy reeds and golden willows hiding,
Now gleaming forth by some rich bank of flowers;
Long flowed the current of my life's clear hours
Onward with thine, whose voice yet haunts my dream,
Though time and change and other mightier powers
Far from thy side have borne me. Thou, smooth stream!
Art winding still thy sunny meads along,
Murmuring to cottage and grey hall thy song—
Low, sweet, unchanged. My being's tide hath passed
Through rocks and storms; yet will I not complain
If, thus wrought free and pure from earthly stain,
Brightly its waves may reach their parent deep at last.

TO THE SKY

FAR from the rustlings of the poplar-bough,
  Which o'er my opening life wild music made,
Far from the green hills with their heathery glow
  And flashing streams, whereby my childhood played;
In the dim city, midst the sounding flow
  Of restless life, to thee in love I turn,
  O thou rich Sky! and from thy splendours learn
How song-birds come and part, flowers wane and blow.
With thee all shapes of glory find their home,
And thou hast taught me well, majestic dome!
  By stars, by sunsets, by soft clouds which rove
Thy blue expanse, or sleep in silvery rest,
That Nature's God hath left no spot unblessed
  With founts of beauty for the eye of love.

ON RECORDS OF IMMATURE GENIUS

Oh! judge in thoughtful tenderness of those
  Who, richly dowered for life, are called to die
Ere the soul's flame, through storms, hath won repose
  In truth's divinest ether, still and high!
  Let their mind's riches claim a trustful sigh!
Deem them but sad sweet fragments of a strain,
  First notes of some yet struggling harmony,
By the strong rush, the crowding joy and pain
  Of many inspirations met, and held
  From its true sphere. Oh, soon it might have swelled
Majestically forth! Nor doubt that He,
  Whose touch mysterious may on earth dissolve
  Those links of music, elsewhere will evolve
Their grand consummate hymn, from passion-gusts made free.

A THOUGHT OF THE SEA

My earliest memories to thy shores are bound,
Thy solemn shores, thou over-chanting Main!
The first rich sunsets, kindling thought profound
In my lone being, made thy restless plain
As the vast shining floor of some dread fane,
All paved with glass and fire. Yet, O blue deep!
Thou that no trace of human hearts dost keep,
Never to thee did love with silvery chain
Draw my soul's dream, which through all nature sought
What waves deny,—some bower of *steadfast* bliss,
A *home* to twine with fancy, feeling, thought,
As with sweet flowers. But chastened hope for this
Now turns from earth's green valleys, as from thee,
To that sole changeless world, where 'there is no more sea.'

DISTANT SOUND OF THE SEA AT EVENING

YET, rolling far up some green mountain-dale,
  Oft let me hear, as ofttimes I have heard,
  Thy swell, thou Deep! when evening calls the bird
And bee to rest; when summer-tints grow pale,
Seen through the gathering of a dewy veil;
  And peasant-steps are hastening to repose,
  And gleaming flocks lie down, and flower-cups close
To the last whisper of the falling gale.
Then midst the dying of all other sound,
When the soul hears thy distant voice profound,
  Lone worshipping, and knows that thro' the night
'Twill worship still, then most its anthem-tone
Speaks to our being of the Eternal One,
  Who girds tired nature with unslumbering might.

ON WATCHING THE FLIGHT OF A SKY-LARK

UPWARD and upward still!—in pearly light
The clouds are steeped! the vernal spirit sighs
With bliss in every wind, and crystal skies
Woo thee, O bird! to thy celestial height.
Bird, piercing heaven with music! thy free flight
Hath meaning for all bosoms; most of all
For those wherein the rapture and the might
Of poesy lie deep, and strive, and burn,
For their high place. O heirs of genius! learn
From the sky's bird your way! No joy may fill
Your hearts, no gift of holy strength be won
To bless *your* songs, ye children of the sun!
Save by the unswerving flight upward and upward still.

A REMEMBRANCE OF GRASMERE

O VALE and lake! within your mountain-urn
  Smiling so tranquilly, and set so deep!
Oft doth your dreamy loveliness return,
  Colouring the tender shadows of my sleep
  With light Elysian; for the hues that steep
Your shores in melting lustre, seem to float
On golden clouds from spirit-lands remote,
  Isles of the blest; and in our memory keep
Their place with holiest harmonies. Fair scene,
  Most loved by evening and her dewy star!
  Oh! ne'er may man, with touch unhallowed, jar
The perfect music of thy charm serene.
Still, still unchanged, may one sweet region wear
Smiles that subdue the soul to love and tears and prayer.

A THOUGHT AT SUNSET

STILL that last look is solemn! though thy rays,
O sun! to-morrow will give back, we know,
The joy to nature's heart. Yet through the glow
Of clouds that mantle thy decline, our gaze
Tracks thee with love half fearful: and in days
When earth too much adored thee, what a swell
Of mournful passion, deepening mighty lays,
Told how thy dying bade thy light farewell,
O sun of Greece! O glorious, festal sun!
Lost, lost!—for them thy golden hours were done,
And darkness lay before them. Happier far
Are we, not thus to thy bright wheels enchained,
Not thus for thy last parting unsustained,
Heirs of a purer day, with its unsetting star.

THOUGHTS CONNECTED WITH TREES

TREES, gracious trees!—how rich a gift ye are,
  Crown of the earth! to human hearts and eyes.
How doth the thought of home, in lands afar,
  Linked with your forms and kindly whisperings rise!
  How the whole picture of a childhood lies
Oft midst your boughs forgotten, buried deep:
  Till, gazing through them up the summer skies,
As hushed we stand, a breeze perchance may creep,
And old sweet leaf-sounds reach the inner world
Where memory coils—and lo! at once unfurled,
  The past, a glowing scroll, before our sight
Spreads clear; while, gushing from their long-sealed urn,
Young thoughts, pure dreams, undoubting prayers return,
  And a lost mother's eye gives back its holy light.

THE SAME

And ye are strong to shelter !—all meek things,
All that need home and covert, love your shade !
Birds of shy song, and low-voiced quiet springs,
And nun-like violets, by the wind betrayed.
Childhood beneath your fresh green tents hath played
With his first primrose wreath : there love hath sought
A veiling gloom for his unuttered thought ;
And silent grief, of day's keen glare afraid,
A refuge for her tears ; and ofttimes there
Hath lone devotion found a place of prayer,
A native temple, solemn, hushed, and dim ;
For wheresoe'er your murmuring tremors thrill
The woody twilight, there man's heart hath still
Confessed a spirit's breath, and heard a ceaseless hymn.

IMAGES OF PATRIARCHAL LIFE

CALM scenes of patriarch life! how long a power
Your unworn pastoral images retain
O'er the true heart, which in its childhood's hour
Drank their pure freshness deep! The camel's train
Winding in patience o'er the desert plain—
The tent, the palm-tree, the reposing flock,
The gleaming fount, the shadow of the rock—
Oh! by how subtle, yet how strong a chain,
And in the influence of its touch how blest,
Are these things linked in many a thoughtful breast
To household-memories, for all change endeared—
The matin bird, the ripple of a stream
Beside our native porch, the hearth-light's gleam,
The voices, earliest by the soul revered!

ATTRACTION OF THE EAST

WHAT secret current of man's nature turns
  Unto the golden East with ceaseless flow?
Still, where the sunbeam at its fountain burns,
  The pilgrim-spirit would adore and glow;
  Rapt in high thoughts, though weary, faint, and slow,
Still doth the traveller through the deserts wind,
  Led by those old Chaldean stars, which know
Where passed the shepherd-fathers of mankind.
Is it some quenchless instinct, which from far
  Still points to where our alienated home
Lay in bright peace? O thou true Eastern star!
  Saviour! atoning Lord! where'er we roam,
Draw still our hearts to thee, else, else how vain
Their hope the fair lost birthright to regain!

TO AN AGED FRIEND

Not long thy voice amongst us may be heard,
  Servant of God!—thy day is almost done;
The charm now lingering in thy look and word
  Is that which hangs about thy setting sun—
  That which the spirit of decay hath won
Still from revering love. Yet doth the sense
  Of life immortal—progress but begun—
Pervade thy mien with such clear eloquence,
  That hope, not sadness, breathes from thy decline;
And the loved flowers which round thee smile farewell
Of more than vernal glory seem to tell,
  By thy pure spirit touched with light divine;
While we, to whom its parting gleams are given,
Forget the grave in trustful thoughts of heaven.

A HAPPY HOUR

Oh ! what a joy to feel that, in my breast,
The founts of childhood's vernal fancies lay
Still pure, though heavily and long repressed
By early-blighted leaves, which o'er their way
Dark summer-storms had heaped. But free glad play
Once more was given them : to the sunshine's glow,
And the sweet wood-song's penetrating flow,
And to the wandering primrose-breath of May,
And the rich hawthorn odours, forth they sprung.
Oh ! not less freshly bright, that now a thought
Of spiritual presence o'er them hung,
And of immortal life ! a germ, unwrought
In childhood's soul to power—now strong, serene,
And full of love and light, colouring the whole blest scene.

MEMORIAL OF A CONVERSATION

YES ! all things tell us of a birthright lost—
A brightness from our nature passed away !
Wanderers we seem that from an alien coast
Would turn to where their Father's mansion lay ;
And but by some lone flower, that midst decay
Smiles mournfully, or by some sculptured stone,
Revealing dimly, with grey moss o'ergrown,
The faint worn impress of its glory's day,
Can trace their once-free heritage, though dreams,
Fraught with its picture, oft in startling gleams
Flash o'er their souls. But One, oh ! One alone
For us the ruined fabric may rebuild,
And bid the wilderness again be filled
With Eden-flowers—One mighty to atone !

FOLIAGE

Come forth, and let us through our hearts receive
  The joy of verdure! See! the honeyed lime
Show'rs cool green light o'er banks where wild-flowers weave
  Thick tapestry, and woodbine-tendrils climb
  Up the brown oak from beds of moss and thyme.
The rich deep masses of the sycamore
  Hang heavy with the fulness of their prime;
And the white poplar from its foliage hoar,
Scatters forth gleams like moonlight, with each gale
  That sweeps the boughs: the chestnut flowers are past,
The crowning glories of the hawthorn fail,
  But arches of sweet eglantine are cast
From every hedge. O! never may we lose,
Dear friend! our fresh delight in simplest nature's hues!

A PRAYER

FATHER in heaven! from whom the simplest flower,
On the high Alps or fiery desert thrown,
Draws not sweet odour or young life alone,
But the deep virtue of an inborn power,
To cheer the wanderer in his fainting hour
With thoughts of Thee—to strengthen, to infuse
Faith, love, and courage, by the tender hues
That speak thy presence! oh, with such a dower
Grace thou my song!—the precious gift bestow
From thy pure Spirit's treasury divine,
To wake one tear of purifying flow,
To soften one wrung heart for thee and thine;
So shall the life breathed through the lowly strain
Be as the meek wild-flower's—if transient, yet not vain.

PRAYER CONTINUED

"What in me is dark,
Illumine: what is low, raise and support."—MILTON.

FAR are the wings of intellect astray
That strive not, Father! to thy heavenly seat;
They rove, but mount not, and the tempests beat
Still on their plumes. O Source of mental day!
Chase from before my spirit's track the array
Of mists and shadows, raised by earthly care,
In troubled hosts that cross the purer air,
And veil the opening of the starry way,
Which brightens on to thee! Oh, guide thou right
My thought's weak pinion; clear my inward sight,
The eternal springs of beauty to discern,
Welling beside thy throne; unseal mine ear,
Nature's true oracles in joy to hear;
Keep my soul wakeful still to listen and to learn.

ORCHARD-BLOSSOMS

Doth thy heart stir within thee at the sight
  Of orchard-blooms upon the mossy bough?
  Doth their sweet household smile waft back the glow
Of childhood's morn—the wondering fresh delight
In earth's new colouring, then all strangely bright,
  A joy of fairyland? Doth some old nook,
  Haunted by visions of thy first-loved book,
Rise on thy soul, with faint-streaked blossoms white
Showered o'er the turf, and the lone primrose-knot,
And robin's nest, still faithful to the spot,
  And the bee's dreary chime? O gentle friend!
The world's cold breath, not Time's, this life bereaves
Of vernal gifts: Time hallows what he leaves,
  And will for us endear spring-memories to the end.

TO A DISTANT SCENE

STILL are the cowslips from thy bosom springing,
O far-off grassy dell!—and dost thou see,
When southern winds first wake their vernal singing,
The star-gleam of the wood anemone?
Doth the shy ringdove haunt thee yet? the bee
Hang on thy flowers as when I breathed farewell
To their wild blooms? and round my beechen tree
Still, in green softness, doth the moss-bank swell?
O strange illusion! by the fond heart wrought,
Whose own warm life suffuses nature's face!
My being's tide of many-coloured thought
Hath passed from thee; and now, rich leafy place!
I paint thee oft, scarce consciously, a scene
Silent, forsaken, dim, shadowed by what hath been.

ON READING PAUL AND VIRGINIA IN CHILDHOOD

O GENTLE story of the Indian isle!
I loved thee in my lonely childhood well
On the sea-shore, when day's last purple smile
Slept on the waters, and their hollow swell
And dying cadence lent a deeper spell
Unto thine ocean-pictures. Midst thy palms
And strange bright birds my fancy joyed to dwell,
And watch the Southern Cross thro' midnight calms,
And track the spicy woods. Yet more I blessed
Thy vision of sweet love—kind, trustful, true,
Lighting the citron groves, a heavenly guest,
With such pure smiles as Paradise once knew.
Even then my young heart wept o'er this world's power
To reach with blight that holiest Eden-flower.

RECORDS OF THE AUTUMN OF 1834

ON READING COLERIDGE'S EPITAPH

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF

> "Stop, Christian passer-by! stop, child of God!
> And read with gentle breast;—Beneath this sod
> A Poet lies, or that which once seemed he;
> Oh! lift one thought in prayer for S. T. C.!
> That he, who once in vain, with toil of breath,
> Found death in life, may here find life in death.
> Mercy, for praise—to be forgiven, for fame—
> He asked and hoped through Christ. Do thou the same."

SPIRIT! so oft in radiant freedom soaring
  High through seraphic mysteries unconfined,
  And oft a diver through the deep of mind,
Its caverns, far below its waves, exploring;
And oft such strains of breezy music pouring,
  As, with the floating sweetness of their sighs,
Could still all fevers of the heart, restoring
  Awhile that freshness left in Paradise;
Say, of those glorious wanderings what the goal!
What the rich fruitage to man's kindred soul
  From wealth of thine bequeathed? O strong and high
And sceptred intellect! thy goal confessed
Was the Redeemer's Cross—thy last bequest
  One lesson breathing thence profound humility!

THE RETURN TO POETRY

ONCE more the eternal melodies from far
  Woo me like songs of home: once more discerning,
Through fitful clouds, the pure majestic star
  Above the poet's world serenely burning,
  Thither my soul, fresh-winged by love, is turning,
As o'er the waves the wood-bird seeks her nest,
For those green heights of dewy stillness yearning,
Whence glorious minds o'erlook this earth's unrest.
  Now be the Spirit of heaven's truth my guide
Thro' the bright land!—that no brief gladness, found
In passing bloom, rich odour, or sweet sound,
  May lure my footsteps from their aim aside:
Their true high quest—to seek, if ne'er to gain,
The inmost purest shrine of that august domain.

DESIGN AND PERFORMANCE

THEY float before my soul, the fair designs
Which I would body forth to life and power,
Like clouds that with their wavering hues and lines
Portray majestic buildings:—dome and tower,
Bright spire, that through the rainbow and the shower
Points to the unchanging stars; and high arcade,
Far-sweeping to some glorious altar, made
For holiest rites. Meanwhile the waning hour
Melts from me, and by fervent dreams o'erwrought,
I sink. O friend! O linked with each high thought!
Aid me, of those rich visions to detain
All I may grasp; until thou see'st fulfilled,
While time and strength allow, my hope to build
For lowly hearts devout, but one enduring fane!

ON A SCENE IN THE DARGLE

'Twas a bright moment of my life when first,
O thou pure stream through rocky portals flowing!
That temple-chamber of thy glory burst
On my glad sight. Thy pebbly couch lay glowing
With deep mosaic hues; and, richly throwing
O'er thy cliff-walls a tinge of autumn's vest,
High bloom'd the heath-flowers, and the wild wood's crest
Was touched with gold. Flow ever thus, bestowing
Gifts of delight, sweet stream! on all who move
Gently along thy shores; and oh! if love—
True love, in secret nursed, with sorrow fraught—
Should sometimes bear his treasured griefs to thee,
Then full of kindness let thy music be,
Singing repose to every troubled thought!

ON THE DATURA ARBOREA

MAJESTIC plant! such fairy dreams as lie
Nursed where the bee sucks in the cowslip's bell,
Are not thy train. Those flowers of vase-like swell,
Clear, large, with dewy moonlight filled from high,
And in their monumental purity
Serenely drooping, round thee seem to draw
Visions linked strangely with that silent awe
Which broods o'er sculpture's works. A meet ally
For those heroic forms, the simply grand,
Art thou: and worthy, carved by plastic hand,
Above some kingly poet's tomb to shine
In spotless marble; honouring one whose strain
Soared upon wings of thought that knew no stain,
Free through the starry heavens of truth divine.

DREAMS OF THE DEAD

OFT in still night-dreams a departed face
  Bends o'er me with sweet earnestness of eye,
Wearing no more of earthly pains a trace,
  But all the tender pity that may lie
  On the clear brow of Immortality,
Calm, yet profound. Soft rays illume that mien;
  The unshadowed moonlight of some far-off sky
Around it floats transparently serene
  As a pure veil of waters. 'O rich Sleep!
  The spells are mighty in thy regions deep,
Which glorify with reconciling breath,
  Effacing, brightening, giving forth to shine
  Beauty's high truth; and how much more divine
Thy power when linked, in this, with thy stern brother Death!

THE POETRY OF THE PSALMS

NOBLY thy song, O minstrel! rushed to meet
The Eternal on the pathway of the blast,
With darkness round him as a mantle cast,
And cherubim to waft his flying seat.
Amidst the hills that smoked beneath his feet,
With trumpet-voice thy spirit called aloud,
And bade the trembling rocks his name repeat,
And the bent cedars, and the bursting cloud.
But far more gloriously to earth made known
By that high strain, than by the thunder's tone,
The flashing torrents, or the ocean's roll,
Jehovah spake, through thee imbreathing fire,
Nature's vast realms for ever to inspire
With the deep worship of a living soul.

TO SILVIO PELLICO, ON READING HIS "PRIGIONE"

THERE are who climb the mountain's heathery side,
Or, in life's vernal strength triumphant, urge
The bark's fleet rushing through the crested surge,
Or spur the courser's fiery race of pride
Over the green savannahs, gleaming wide
By some vast lake; yet thus, on foaming sea,
Or chainless wild, reign far less nobly free
Than thou, in that lone dungeon glorified,
By thy brave suffering. Thou from its dark cell
Fierce thought and baleful passion didst exclude,
Filling the dedicated solitude
With God; and where His Spirit deigns to dwell,
Though the worn frame in fetters withering lie,
There throned in peace divine is liberty!

TO THE SAME, RELEASED

How flows thy being now?—like some glad hymn,
  One strain of solemn rapture?—doth thine eye
Wander through tears of voiceless feeling dim
  O'er the crowned Alps, that midst the upper sky
  Sleep in the sunlight of thine Italy?
Or is thy gaze of reverent love profound
Unto these dear parental faces bound,
  Which, with their silvery hair, so oft glanced by,
Haunting thy prison-dreams? Where'er thou art,
Blessings be shed upon thine inmost heart!
  Joy, from kind looks, blue skies, and flowery sod,
For that pure voice of thoughtful wisdom sent
Forth from thy cell, in sweetness eloquent,
  Of love to man, and quenchless trust in God!

HOPE OF FUTURE COMMUNION WITH NATURE

If e'er again my spirit be allowed
  Converse with Nature in her chambers deep,
Where lone, and mantled with the rolling cloud,
  She broods o'er new-born waters, as they leap
  In sword-like flashes down the heathery steep
From caves of mystery;—if I roam once more
Where dark pines quiver to the torrent's roar,
  And voiceful oaks respond;—may I not reap
A more ennobling joy, a loftier power,
Than e'er was shed on life's more vernal hour
  From such communion? Yes! I then shall know
That not in vain have sorrow, love, and thought
Their long still work of preparation wrought,
  For that more perfect sense of God revealed below.

THOUGHTS DURING SICKNESS

INTELLECTUAL POWERS

O Thought! O Memory! gems for ever heaping
  High in the illumined chambers of the mind—
And thou, divine Imagination! keeping
  Thy lamp's lone star mid shadowy hosts enshrined;
  How in one moment rent and disentwined,
At fever's fiery touch, apart they fall,
Your glorious combinations; broken all,
  As the sand-pillars by the desert's wind
Scattered to whirlwind-dust! Oh, soon uncrowned!
  Well may your parting swift, your strange return,
Subdue the soul to lowliness profound,
  Guiding its chastened vision to discern
How by meek Faith heaven's portals must be passed,
Ere it can hold your gifts inalienably fast.

ON RETZSCH'S DESIGN OF THE ANGEL OF DEATH

[MRS JAMESON, in describing a visit which she paid the artist Retzsch, says—"Afterwards he placed upon his easel a wondrous face which made me shrink back—not with terror, for it was perfectly beautiful,—but with awe, for it was unspeakably fearful; the hair streamed back from the pale brow—the orbs of sight appeared at first two dark hollow unfathomable spaces, like those in a skull; but when I drew nearer and looked attentively, two lovely living eyes looked at me again out of the depth of the shadow, as if from the bottom of an abyss. The mouth was divinely sweet, but sad, and the softest repose rested on every feature. This, he told me, was the ANGEL OF DEATH."]

WELL might thine awful image thus arise
With that high calm upon thy regal brow,
And the deep solemn sweetness in those eyes,
Unto the glorious artist! Who but thou
The fleeting forms of beauty can endow
For him with permanency? who make those gleams
Of brighter life, that colour his lone dreams,
Immortal things? Let others trembling bow,
Angel of death! before thee;—not to those
Whose spirits with Eternal Truth repose,
Art thou a fearful shape. And oh! for me,
How full of welcome would thine aspect shine,
Did not the cords of strong affection twine
So fast around my soul, it cannot spring to thee!

SICKNESS LIKE NIGHT

THOU art like Night, O Sickness! deeply stilling
  Within my heart the world's disturbing sound,
And the dim quiet of my chamber filling
  With low sweet voices by Life's tumult drowned.
  Thou art like awful Night! thou gatherest round
The things that are unseen—though close they lie;
  And with a truth, clear, startling, and profound
Givest their dread presence to our mental eye.
Thou art like starry spiritual Night!
  High and immortal thoughts attend thy way,
And revelations, which the common light
  Brings not, though wakening with its rosy ray
All outward life. Be welcome, then, thy rod,
Before whose touch my soul unfolds itself to God.

REMEMBRANCE OF NATURE

O NATURE! thou didst rear me for thine own,
With thy free singing-birds and mountain-brooks;
Feeding my thoughts in primrose-haunted nooks,
With fairy fantasies and wood-dreams lone;
And thou didst teach me every wandering tone
Drawn from thy many-whispering trees and waves,
And guide my steps to founts and sparry caves,
And where bright mosses wove thee a rich throne
Midst the green hills. And now that, far estranged
From all sweet sounds and odours of thy breath,
Fading I lie, within my heart unchanged
So glows the love of thee, that not for death
Seems that pure passion's fervour—but ordained
To meet on brighter shores thy majesty unstained.

FLOWERS

Welcome, O pure and lovely forms! again
  Unto the shadowy stillness of my room!
For not alone ye bring a joyous train
  Of summer-thoughts attendant on your bloom—
  Visions of freshness, of rich bowery gloom,
Of the low murmurs filling mossy dells,
Of stars that look down on your folded bells
  Through dewy leaves, of many a wild perfume
Greeting the wanderer of the hill and grove
  Like sudden music. More than this ye bring—
Far more. Ye whisper of the all-fostering love
  Which thus hath clothed you, and whose dovelike wing
Broods o'er the sufferer drawing fevered breath,
Whether the couch be that of life or death.

FLIGHT OF THE SPIRIT

WHITHER, oh! whither wilt thou wing thy way?
What solemn region first upon thy sight
Shall break, unveiled for terror or delight?—
What hosts, magnificent in dread array,
My spirit! when thy prison-house of clay,
After long strife is rent? Fond fruitless quest!
The unfledged bird, within his narrow nest,
Sees but a few green branches o'er him play,
And through their parting leaves, by fits revealed,
A glimpse of summer sky; nor knows the field
Wherein his dormant powers must yet be tried.
Thou art that bird!—of what beyond thee lies
Far in the untracked immeasurable skies,
Knowing but this—that thou shalt find thy Guide.

RECOVERY

BACK, then, once more to breast the waves of life,
To battle on against the unceasing spray,
To sink o'erwearied in the stormy strife,
And rise to strife again; yet on my way,
Oh! linger still, thou light of better day!
Born in the hours of loneliness. And you,
Ye childlike thoughts! the holy and the true—
Ye that came bearing, while subdued I lay,
The faith, the insight of life's vernal morn
Back on my soul, a clear bright sense, new-born,
Now leave me not; but as, profoundly pure,
A blue stream rushes through a darker lake
Unchanged, even thus with me your journey take,
Wafting sweet airs of heaven through this low world obscure.

SABBATH SONNET

COMPOSED BY MRS HEMANS A FEW DAYS BEFORE HER DEATH, AND DEDICATED TO HER BROTHER.

How many blessèd groups this hour are bending,
Through England's primrose meadow-paths, their way
Towards spire and tower, midst shadowy elms ascending,
Whence the sweet chimes proclaim the hallowed day!
The halls from old heroic ages grey
Pour their fair children forth; and hamlets low,
With whose thick orchard-blooms the soft winds play,
Send out their inmates in a happy flow,
Like a freed vernal stream. I may not tread
With them those pathways—to the feverish bed
Of sickness bound; yet, O my God! I bless
Thy mercy, that with Sabbath-peace hath filled
My chastened heart, and all its throbbings stilled
To one deep calm of lowliest thankfulness!

HYMNS FOR CHILDHOOD

INTRODUCTORY VERSES

Oh ! blest art thou whose steps may rove
Through the green paths of vale and grove,
Or, leaving all their charms below,
Climb the wild mountain's airy brow;

And gaze afar o'er cultured plains,
And cities with their stately fanes,
And forests that beneath thee lie,
And ocean mingling with the sky.

For man can show thee naught so fair
As Nature's varied marvels there;
And if thy pure and artless breast
Can feel their grandeur, thou art blest !

For thee the stream in beauty flows,
For thee the gale of summer blows;
And, in deep glen and wood-walk free,
Voices of joy still breathe for thee.

But happier far, if then thy soul
Can soar to Him who made the whole,
If to thine eye the simplest flower
Portray His bounty and His power!

If, in whate'er is bright or grand,
Thy mind can trace His viewless hand;
If Nature's music bid thee raise
Thy song of gratitude and praise;

If heaven and earth, with beauty fraught,
Lead to His throne thy raptured thought;
If there thou lovest *His* love to read—
Then, wanderer! thou art blest indeed.

THE SUN

The Sun comes forth: each mountain-height
Glows with a tinge of rosy light,
And flowers that slumbered through the night
Their dewy leaves unfold;
A flood of splendour bursts on high,
And ocean's breast gives back a sky
All steeped in molten gold.

Oh! thou art glorious, orb of day!
Exulting nations hail thy ray,
Creation swells a choral lay
To welcome thy return;
From thee all nature draws her hues,
Thy beams the insect's wing suffuse,
And in the diamond burn.

Yet must thou fade. When earth and heaven
By fire and tempest shall be riven,
Thou, from thy sphere of radiance driven,
O Sun! must fall at last;
Another heaven, another earth,
New power, new glory shall have birth,
When all we see is past.

But He who gave the word of might,
"Let there be light," and there was light—
Who bade thee chase the gloom of night,
And beam the world to bless;
For ever bright, for ever pure,
Alone unchanging shall endure,
The Sun of Righteousness!

. . . . .

THE RAINBOW

"I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth."—GENESIS, ix. 13.

SOFT falls the mild reviving shower
From April's changeful skies,
And raindrops bend each trembling flower
They tinge with richer dyes.

Soon shall their genial influence call
A thousand buds to day,
Which, waiting but that balmy fall,
In hidden beauty lay.

Even now full many a blossom's bell
With fragrance fills the shade;
And verdure clothes each grassy dell,
In brighter tints arrayed.

But mark! what arch of varied hue
From heaven to earth is bowed?
Haste, ere it vanish,—haste to view
The rainbow in the cloud!

How bright its glory! There behold
The emerald's verdant rays;
The topaz blends its hue of gold
With the deep ruby's blaze.

Yet not alone to charm thy sight
Was given the vision fair:
Gaze on that arch of coloured light,
And read God's mercy there.

It tells us that the mighty deep,
Fast by the Eternal chained,
No more o'er earth's domain shall sweep,
Awful and unrestrained.

It tells that seasons, heat and cold,
Fixed by His sovereign will,
Shall, in their course, bid man behold
Seed-time and harvest still;

That still the flower shall deck the field,
When vernal zephyrs blow,
That still the vine its fruit shall yield,
When autumn sunbeams glow.

Then, child of that fair earth ! which yet
  Smiles with each charm endowed,
Bless thou His name, whose mercy set
  The rainbow in the cloud !

THE RIVERS

Go ! trace the unnumbered streams, o'er earth
  That wind their devious course,
That draw from Alpine heights their birth,
  Deep vale, or cavern-source.

Some by majestic cities glide,
  Proud scenes of man's renown ;
Some lead their solitary tide
  Where pathless forests frown.

Some calmly roll o'er golden sands,
  Where Afric's deserts lie ;
Or spread, to clothe rejoicing lands
  With rich fertility.

These bear the bark, whose stately sail
  Exulting seems to swell ;
While these, scarce rippled by a gale,
  Sleep in the lonely dell.

Yet on, alike, though swift or slow
  Their various waves may sweep,
Through cities or through shades, they flow
  To the same boundless deep.

Oh ! thus, whate'er our path of life,
Through sunshine or through gloom,
Through scenes of quiet or of strife,
Its end is still the tomb.

The chief whose mighty deeds we hail,
The monarch throned on high,
The peasant in his native vale—
All journey on to die.

But if Thy guardian care, my God !
The pilgrim's course attend,
I will not fear the dark abode
To which my footsteps bend.

For thence thine all-redeeming Son,
Who died the world to save,
In light, in triumph, rose, and won
The victory from the grave.

THE SKYLARK

CHILD'S MORNING HYMN

THE skylark, when the dews of morn
Hang tremulous on flower and thorn,
And violets round his nest exhale
Their fragrance on the early gale,
To the first sunbeam spreads his wings,
Buoyant with joy, and soars and sings.

He rests not on the leafy spray
To warble his exulting lay;
But high above the morning cloud
Mounts in triumphant freedom proud,
And swells, when nearest to the sky,
His notes of sweetest ecstasy.

Thus, my Creator! thus the more
My spirit's wing to thee can soar,
The more she triumphs to behold
Thy love in all thy works unfold,
And bids her hymns of rapture be
Most glad when rising most to thee!

THE BIRDS

"Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings? and not one of them is forgotten before God."—ST LUKE, xii. 6.

TRIBES of the air! whose favoured race
May wander through the realms of space,
Free guests of earth and sky;
In form, in plumage, and in song,
What gifts of nature mark your throng
With bright variety!

Nor differ less your forms, your flight,
Your dwellings hid from hostile sight,
And the wild haunts ye love;
Birds of the gentle beak! * how dear
Your wood-note to the wanderer's ear,
In shadowy vale or grove!

* An Italian appellation for singing-birds.

Far other scenes, remote, sublime,
Where swain or hunter may not climb
The mountain-eagle seeks;
Alone he reigns a monarch there,
Scarce will the chamois' footstep dare
Ascend his Alpine peaks.

Others there are that make their home
Where the white billows roar and foam
Around the o'erhanging rock;
Fearless they skim the angry wave,
Or, sheltered in their sea-beat cave,
The tempest's fury mock.

Where Afric's burning realm expands,
The ostrich haunts the desert-sands,
Parched by the blaze of day;
The swan, where northern rivers glide,
Through the tall reeds that fringe their tide
Floats graceful on her way.

The condor, where the Andes tower,
Spreads his broad wing of pride and power,
And many a storm defies;
Bright in the Orient realms of morn,
All beauty's richest hues adorn
The bird of paradise.

Some, amidst India's groves of palm,
And spicy forests breathing balm,
Weave soft their pendant nest;
Some, deep in Western wilds, display
Their fairy form and plumage gay,
In rainbow colours drest.

Others no varied song may pour,
May boast no eagle-plume to soar,
  No tints of light may wear;
Yet know, our heavenly Father guides
The least of these, and well provides
  For each, with tenderest care.

Shall He not then thy guardian be?
Will not His aid extend to thee?
  Oh, safely may'st thou rest!
Trust in His love; and even should pain,
Should sorrow tempt thee to complain,
  Know what He wills is best!

THE THUNDER-STORM

Deep fiery clouds o'ercast the sky,
  Dead stillness reigns in air;
There is not even a breeze, on high
  The gossamer to bear.

The woods are hushed, the waves at rest,
  The lake is dark and still,
Reflecting on its shadowy breast
  Each form of rock and hill.

The lime-leaf waves not in the grove,
  The rose-tree in the bower;
The birds have ceased their songs of love,
  Awed by the threatening hour.

'Tis noon;—yet nature's calm profound
Seems as at midnight deep:
But hark! what peal of awful sound
Breaks on creation's sleep?

The thunder-burst!—its rolling might
Seems the firm hills to shake;
And in terrific splendour bright
The gathered lightnings break.

Yet fear not, shrink not thou, my child!
Though by the bolt's descent
Were the tall cliffs in ruins piled,
And the wide forests rent.

Doth not thy God behold thee still
With all-surveying eye?
Doth not his power all nature fill,
Around, beneath, on high?

Know, hadst thou eagle-pinions free,
To track the realms of air,
Thou couldst not reach a spot where He
Would not be with thee there.

In the wide city's peopled towers,
On the vast ocean's plains,
Midst the deep woodland's loneliest bowers,
Alike the Almighty reigns.

Then fear not, though the angry sky
A thousand darts should cast,
Why should we tremble even to die,
And be with Him at last?

THE NIGHTINGALE

CHILD'S EVENING HYMN

When twilight's grey and pensive hour
Brings the low breeze and shuts the flower,
And bid's the solitary star
Shine in pale beauty from afar;

When gathering shades the landscape veil,
And peasants seek their village-dale,
And mists from river-wave arise,
And dew in every bosom lies;

When evening's primrose opes to shed
Soft fragrance round her grassy bed;
When glow-worms in the wood-walk light
Their lamp to cheer the traveller's sight;—

At that calm hour, so still, so pale,
Awakes the lonely nightingale;
And from a hermitage of shade
Fills with her voice the forest-glade.

And sweeter far that melting voice
Than all which through the day rejoice;
And still shall bard and wanderer love
The twilight music of the grove.

Father in Heaven! oh, thus when day
With all its cares hath passed away,
And silent hours waft peace on earth,
And hush the louder strains of mirth;

Thus may sweet songs of praise and prayer
To Thee my spirit's offering bear—
Yon star my signal, set on high,
For vesper-hymns of piety.

So may Thy mercy and Thy power
Protect me through the midnight hour,
And balmy sleep and visions blest
Smile on Thy servant's bed of rest.

THE NORTHERN SPRING

When the soft breath of Spring goes forth
Far o'er the mountains of the North,
How soon those wastes of dazzling snow
With life and bloom and beauty glow!

Then bursts the verdure of the plains,
Then break the streams from icy chains;
And the glad reindeer seeks no more
Amidst deep snows his mossy store.

Then the dark pine-wood's boughs are seen
Fringed tenderly with living green;
And roses, in their brightest dyes,
By Lapland's founts and lakes arise.

Thus, in a moment, from the gloom
And the cold fetters of the tomb,
Thus shall the blest Redeemer's voice
Call forth his servants to rejoice

For He, whose word is truth, hath said,
His power to life shall wake the dead,
And summon those He loves on high,
To "put on immortality."

Then, all its transient sufferings o'er,
On wings of light the soul shall soar,
Exulting, to that blest abode
Where tears of sorrow never flowed.

PARAPHRASE OF PSALM CXLVIII.

"Praise ye the Lord. Praise ye the Lord from the heavens: praise him in the heights."

PRAISE ye the Lord! on every height
Songs to His glory raise!
Ye angel-hosts, ye stars of night,
Join in immortal praise!

O heaven of heavens! let praise far-swelling
From all thine orbs be sent;
Join in the strain, ye waters! dwelling
Above the firmament.

For His the word which gave you birth,
And majesty and might:
Praise to the Highest from the earth,
And let the deeps unite!

O fire and vapour, hail and snow!
Ye servants of His will;
O stormy winds! that only blow
His mandates to fulfil;

Mountains and rocks, to heaven that rise!
Fair cedars of the wood!
Creatures of life that wing the skies,
Or track the plains for food!

Judges of nations! kings, whose hand
Waves the proud sceptre high!
O youths and virgins of the land!
O age and infancy!

Praise ye His name, to whom alone
All homage should be given;
Whose glory from the eternal throne
Spreads wide o'er earth and heaven!

THE OCEAN

"They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; these see the works of the Lord, and His wonders in the deep."
PSALM cvii. 23, 24.

HE that in venturous barks hath been
A wanderer on the deep,
Can tell of many an awful scene,
Where storms for ever sweep.

For many a fair majestic sight
  Hath met his wandering eye
Beneath the streaming northern-light,
  Or blaze of Indian sky.

Go ! ask him of the whirlpool's roar,
  Whose echoing thunder peals
Loud, as if rushed along the shore
  An army's chariot-wheels ;

Of icebergs, floating o'er the main
  Or fixed upon the coast,
Like glittering citadel or fane,
  Mid the bright realms of frost ;

Of coral rocks from waves below
  In steep ascent that tower,
And, fraught with peril, daily grow,
  Formed by an insect's power ;

Of sea-fires, which at dead of night
  Shine o'er the tides afar,
And make the expanse of ocean bright
  As heaven with many a star.

O God ! thy name they well may praise
  Who to the deep go down,
And trace the wonders of thy ways
  Where rocks and billows frown !

If glorious be that awful deep
  No human power can bind,
What then art Thou, who bid'st it keep
  Within its bounds confined ?

Let heaven and earth in praise unite!
Eternal praise to Thee,
Whose word can rouse the tempest's might,
Or still the raging sea!

THE STARS

"The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handywork."
PSALM xix. 1.

No cloud obscures the summer sky,
The moon in brightness walks on high;
And, set in azure, every star
Shines, a pure gem of heaven, afar.

Child of the earth! oh, lift thy glance
To yon bright firmament's expanse;
The glories of its realm explore,
And gaze and wonder and adore!

Doth it not speak to every sense
The marvels of Omnipotence?
Seest thou not there the Almighty name
Inscribed in characters of flame?

Count o'er those lamps of quenchless light,
That sparkle through the shades of night:
Behold them! can a mortal boast
To number that celestial host?

Mark well each little star, whose rays
In distant splendour meet thy gaze:
Each is a world, by Him sustained
Who from eternity hath reigned.

Each, kindled not for earth alone,
Hath circling planets of its own,
And beings, whose existence springs
From Him, the all-powerful King of kings.

Haply, those glorious beings know
No stain of guilt or tear of woe,
But, raising still the adoring voice,
For ever in their God rejoice.

What then art thou, O child of clay!
Amid creations grandeur, say?
Even as an insect on the breeze,
Even as a dewdrop lost in seas.

Yet fear thou not! The sovereign hand
Which spread the ocean and the land,
And hung the rolling spheres in air,
Hath even for thee a Father's care!

Be thou at peace. The all-seeing Eye,
Pervading earth and air and sky—
The searching glance which none may flee,
Is still in mercy turned on thee.

THE SCEPTIC

["Leur raison, qu'ils prennent pour guide, ne présente à leur esprit que des conjectures et des embarras; les absurdités où ils tombent en niant la Religion deviennent plus insoutenables que les vérités dont la hauteur les étonne; et pour ne vouloir pas croire des mystères incomprehensibles, ils suivent l'une après l'autre d'incomprehensibles erreurs."—Bossuet.]

When the young Eagle, with exulting eye,
Has learned to dare the splendour of the sky,
And leave the Alps beneath him in his course,
To bathe his crest in morn's empyreal source;
Will his free wing from that majestic height
Descend to follow some wild meteor's light,
Which far below, with evanescent fire,
Shines to delude and dazzles to expire?
No! still thro' clouds he wings his upward way,
And proudly claims his heritage of day.
And shall the spirit, on whose ardent gaze
The dayspring from on high hath poured its blaze,
Turn from that pure effulgence to the beam
Of earth-born light that sheds a treacherous gleam,
Luring the wanderer from the star of faith
To the deep valley of the shades of death?

What bright exchange, what treasure shall be given,
For the high birthright of its hope in heaven?
If lost the gem which empires could not buy,
What yet remains? A dark eternity!

Is earth still Eden?—might a seraph-guest
Still midst its chosen bowers delighted rest?
Is all so cloudless and so calm below,
We seek no fairer scenes than life can show,—
That the cold Sceptic, in his pride elate,
Rejects the promise of a brighter state,
And leaves the Rock no tempest shall displace,
To rear his dwelling on the quicksand's base?

Votary of doubt! then join the festal throng,
Bask in the sunbeam, listen to the song,
Spread the rich board, and fill the wine-cup high,
And bind the wreath ere yet the roses die!
'Tis well—thine eye is yet undimmed by time,
And thy heart bounds, exulting in its prime;
Smile, then, unmoved at Wisdom's warning voice,
And in the glory of thy strength rejoice.

But life hath sterner tasks. Even youth's brief hours
Survive the beauty of their loveliest flowers;
The founts of joy, where pilgrims rest from toil,
Are few and distant on the desert soil;
The soul's pure flame the breath of storms must fan,
And pain and sorrow claim their nursling—Man.
Earth's noblest sons the bitter cup have shared—
Proud child of reason! how art thou prepared?
When years, with silent might, thy frame have bowed,
And o'er thy spirit cast their wintry cloud,

Will Memory soothe thee on thy bed of pain
With the bright images of pleasure's train?
Yes! as the sight of some far-distant shore,
Whose well-known scenes his foot shall tread no more,
Would cheer the seaman, by the eddying wave
Drawn, vainly struggling, to the unfathomed grave!
Shall Hope, the faithful cherub, hear thy call,
She who, like heaven's own sunbeam, smiles for all?
Will she speak comfort? Thou hast shorn her plume,
That might have raised thee far above the tomb,
And hushed the only voice whose angel-tone
Soothes when all melodies of joy are flown!
For she was born beyond the stars to soar,
And kindling at the source of life, adore.
Thou couldst not, mortal! rivet to the earth
Her eye, whose beam is of celestial birth:
She dwells with those who leave her pinion free,
And sheds the dews of heaven on all but thee.

Yet few there are so lonely, so bereft,
But some true heart, that beats to theirs, is left;
And, haply, one whose strong affection's power
Unchanged may triumph through misfortune's hour,
Still with fond care supports thy languid head,
And keeps unwearied vigils by thy bed.

But thou whose thoughts have no blest home above,
Captive of earth! and canst thou dare to love?
To nurse such feelings as delight to rest
Within that hallowed shrine, a parent's breast;
To fix each hope, concentrate every tie,
On one frail idol, destined but to die;
Yet mock the faith that points to worlds of light,

Where severed souls, made perfect, re-unite?
Then tremble! cling to every passing joy,
Twined with the life a moment may destroy!
If there be sorrow in a parting tear,
Still let "*for ever*" vibrate on thine ear;
If some bright hour on rapture's wing hath flown,
Find more than anguish in the thought—'tis gone!

Go! to a voice such magic influence give,
Thou canst not lose its melody, and live;
And make an eye the lode-star of thy soul,
And let a glance the springs of thought control;
Gaze on a mortal form with fond delight,
Till the fair vision mingles with thy sight;
There seek thy blessings, there repose thy trust,
Lean on the willow, idolise the dust!
Then, when thy treasure best repays thy care,
Think on that dread "*for ever*"—and despair!

And oh! no strange unwonted storm there needs
To wreck at once thy fragile ark of reeds.
Watch well its course—explore with anxious eye
Each little cloud that floats along the sky.
Is the blue canopy serenely fair?
Yet may the thunderbolt unseen be there,
And the bark sink when peace and sunshine sleep
On the smooth bosom of the waveless deep.
Yes! ere a sound, a sign, announce thy fate,
May the blow fall which makes thee desolate.
Not always heaven's destroying angel shrouds
His awful form in tempests and in clouds:
He fills the summer air with latent power,
He hides his venom in the scented flower,

He steals upon thee in the zephyr's breath,
And festal garlands veil the shafts of death!

Where art thou, *then*, who thus didst rashly cast
Thine all upon the mercy of the blast,
And vainly hope the Tree of Life to find
Rooted in sands that flit before the wind?
Is not that earth thy spirit loved so well
It wished not in a brighter sphere to dwell,
Become a desert now, a vale of gloom,
O'ershadowed with the midnight of the tomb?
Where shalt thou turn? It is not thine to raise
To yon pure heaven thy calm confiding gaze;
No gleam reflected from that realm of rest
Steals on the darkness of thy troubled breast;
Not for thine eye shall Faith divinely shed
Her glory round the image of the dead;
And if, when slumber's lonely couch is pressed,
The form departed be thy spirit's guest,
It bears no light from purer worlds to this;
Thy future lends not even a dream of bliss.

But who shall dare the gate of life to close,
Or say, *thus far* the stream of mercy flows?
That fount unsealed, whose boundless waves embrace
Each distant isle, and visit every race,
Pours from the throne of God its current free,
Nor yet denies the immortal draught to thee.
Oh! while the doom impends, not yet decreed,
While yet the Atoner hath not ceased to plead—
While still, suspended by a single hair,
The sharp bright sword hangs quivering in the air,
Bow down thy heart to Him who will not break

The bruisèd reed ; even yet, awake, awake !
Patient, because Eternal, He may hear
Thy prayer of agony with pitying ear,
And send his chastening Spirit from above,
O'er the deep chaos of thy soul to move.

But seek thou mercy through His name alone,
To whose unequalled sorrows none was shown ;
Through Him, who here in mortal garb abode,
As man to suffer, and to heal as God ;
And, born the sons of utmost time to bless,
Endured all scorn and aided all distress.
Call thou on Him ! for he, in human form,
Hath walked the waves of life, and stilled the storm.
He, when her hour of lingering grace was past,
O'er Salem wept, relenting to the last—
Wept with such tears as Judah's monarch poured
O'er his lost child, ungrateful yet deplored ;
And, offering guiltless blood that guilt might live,
Taught from His Cross the lesson—to forgive !
Call thou on Him ! His prayer even then arose,
Breathed in unpitied anguish for His foes.
And haste !—ere bursts the lightning from on high,
Fly to the City of thy Refuge, fly !
So shall the Avenger turn his steps away,
And sheath his falchion, baffled of its prey.

Yet must long days roll on ere peace shall brood,
As the soft halcyon, o'er thy heart subdued ;
Ere yet the Dove of Heaven descend to shed
Inspiring influence o'er thy fallen head.
—He who hath pined in dungeons, midst the shade
Of such deep night as man for man hath made,

Through lingering years—if called at length to be
Once more, by nature's boundless charter, free,
Shrinks feebly back, the blaze of noon to shun,
Fainting at day, and blasted by the sun.
Thus, when the captive soul hath long remained
In its own dread abyss of darkness chained,
If the Deliverer, in his might, at last
Its fetters, born of earth, to earth should cast,
The beam of truth o'erpowers its dazzled sight,
Trembling it sinks, and finds no joy in light.
But this will pass away ; that spark of mind,
Within thy frame unquenchably enshrined,
Shall live to triumph in its brightening ray,
Born to be fostered with ethereal day.
Then wilt thou bless the hour when o'er thee passed,
On wing of flame, the purifying blast,
And sorrow's voice, through paths before untrod,
Like Sinai's trumpet, called thee to thy God !

But hopest thou, in thy panoply of pride,
Heaven's messenger, Affliction, to deride ?
In thine own strength unaided to defy,
With Stoic smile, the arrows of the sky ?
Torn by the Vulture, fettered to the rock,
Still, demigod ! the tempest wilt thou mock ?
Alas ! the tower that crests the mountain's brow
A thousand years may awe the vale below,
Yet not the less be shattered on its height
By one dread moment of the earthquake's might.
A thousand pangs thy bosom may have borne,
In silent fortitude or haughty scorn,
Till comes the one, the master-anguish, sent
To break the mighty heart that ne'er was bent.

Oh ! What is nature's strength ? The vacant eye,
By mind deserted, hath a dread reply !
The wild delirious laughter of despair,
The mirth of frenzy—seek an answer there !
Turn not away, though pity's cheek grow pale,
Close not thine ear against their awful tale.
They tell thee Reason, wandering from the ray
Of Faith, the blazing pillar of her way,
In the mid-darkness of the stormy wave
Forsook the struggling soul she could not save.
Weep not, sad moralist ! o'er desert plains
Strewed with the wrecks of grandeur—mouldering fanes,
Arches of triumph, long with weeds o'ergrown,
And regal cities, now the serpent's own :
Earth has more awful ruins. One lost mind,
Whose star is quenched, hath lessons for mankind
Of deeper import than each prostrate dome
Mingling its marble with the dust of Rome.

But who with eye unshrinking shall explore
That waste, illumed by reason's beam no more ?
Who pierce the deep mysterious clouds that roll
Around the shattered temple of the soul,
Curtained with midnight ? Low its columns lie,
And dark the chambers of its imagery ;
Sunk are its idols now—and God alone
May rear the fabric by their fall o'erthrown.
Yet from its inmost shrine, by storms laid bare,
Is heard an oracle that cries—" Beware !
Child of the dust ! but ransomed of the skies !
One breath of Heaven, and thus thy glory dies !
Haste, ere the hour of doom—draw nigh to Him
Who dwells above, between the cherubim ! "

Spirit dethroned, and checked in mid career!
Son of the Morning! exiled from thy sphere,
Tell us thy tale! Perchance thy race was run
With science in the chariot of the sun;
Free as the winds the paths of space to sweep,
Traverse the untrodden kingdoms of the deep,
And search the laws that nature's springs control,
There tracing all—save Him who guides the whole.
Haply thine eye its ardent glance had cast
Through the dim shades, the portals of the past;
By the bright lamp of thought thy care had fed
From the far beacon-lights of ages fled,
The depths of time exploring, to retrace
The glorious march of many a vanished race.
Or did thy power pervade the living lyre
Till its deep chords became instinct with fire,
Silenced all meaner notes, and swelled on high,
Full and alone, their mighty harmony;
While woke each passion from its cell profound,
And nations started at the electric sound?

Lord of the ascendant! what avails it now,
Though bright the laurels waved upon thy brow?
What though thy name, through distant empires heard,
Bade the heart bound as doth a battle-word?
Was it for this thy still unwearied eye
Kept vigil with the watchfires of the sky,
To make the secrets of all ages thine,
And commune with majestic thoughts that shine
O'er Time's long shadowy pathway? Hath thy mind
Severed its lone dominions from mankind,
For this to woo their homage? Thou hast sought
All, save the wisdom with salvation fraught;

Won every wreath but that which will not die,
Nor aught neglected save eternity!

And did all fail thee in the hour of wrath,
When burst the o'erwhelming vials on thy path?
Could not the voice of Fame inspire thee then,
O spirit, sceptred by the sons of men!
With an immortal's courage, to sustain
The transient agonies of earthly pain?
—One, one there was, all-powerful to have saved
When the loud fury of the billow raved;
But Him thou knew'st not—and the light He lent
Hath vanished from its ruined tenement,
But left thee breathing, moving, lingering yet,
A thing we shrink from—vainly to forget!

Lift the dread veil no further! Hide, oh hide
The bleeding form, the couch of suicide!
The dagger, grasped in death—the brow, the eye,
Lifeless, yet stamped with rage and agony;
The soul's dark traces left in many a line
Graved on his mien who died—"and made no sign!"
Approach not, gaze not—lest thy fevered brain
Too deep that image of despair retain.
Angels of slumber! o'er the midnight hour
Let not such visions claim unhallowed power,
Lest the mind sink with terror, and above
See but the Avenger's arm, forget the Atoner's love!

O Thou! the unseen, the all-seeing! Thou whose ways
Mantled with darkness, mock all finite gaze—
Before whose eyes the creatures of Thy hand,
Seraph and man alike, in weakness stand,

And countless ages, trampling into clay
Earth's empires on their march, are but a day;
Father of world's unknown, unnumbered! Thou,
With whom all time is one eternal Now
Who know'st no past nor future—Thou whose breath
Goes forth, and bears to myriads life or death!
Look on us! guide us!—wanderers of a sea
Wild and obscure, what are we, reft of Thee?
A thousand rocks, deep-hid, elude our sight,
A star may set—and we are lost in night;
A breeze may waft us to the whirlpool's brink,
A treacherous song allure us—and we sink!

Oh! by His love, who, veiling Godhead's light,
To moments circumscribed the Infinite,
And heaven and earth disdained not to ally,
By that dread union—Man with Deity;
Immortal tears o'er mortal woes who shed,
And, ere He raised them, wept above the dead;
Save, or we perish! Let Thy word control
The earthquakes of that universe—the soul;
Pervade the depths of passion; speak once more
The mighty mandate, guard of every shore,
"Here shall thy waves be stayed;" in grief, in pain,
The fearful poise of reason's sphere maintain.
Thou, by whom suns are balanced! thus secure
In Thee shall faith and fortitude endure;
Conscious of Thee, unfaltering, shall the just
Look upward still, in high and holy trust,
And by affliction guided to Thy shrine,
The first, last thought of suffering hearts be Thine.
And oh! be near when, clothed with conquering power,
The King of Terrors claims his own dread hour:

When on the edge of that unknown abyss
Which darkly parts us from the realm of bliss,
Awe-struck alike the timid and the brave,
Alike subdued the monarch and the slave,
Must drink the cup of trembling—when we see
Naught in the universe but Death and Thee,
Forsake us not! If still, when life was young,
Faith to thy bosom, as her home, hath sprung,
If Hope's retreat hath been, through all the past,
The shadow by the Rock of Ages cast,
Father, forsake us not! When tortures urge
The shrinking soul to that mysterious verge—
When from thy justice to thy love we fly,
On nature's conflict look with pitying eye;
Bid the strong wind, the fire, the earthquake cease,
Come in the "small still voice," and whisper—Peace!

For oh, 'tis awful! He that hath beheld
The parting spirit, by its fears repelled,
Cling in weak terror to its earthly chain,
And from the dizzy brink recoil, in vain;
He that hath seen the last convulsive throe
Dissolve the union formed and closed in woe,
Well knows that hour is awful. In the pride
Of youth and health, by sufferings yet untried,
We talk of death as something which 'twere sweet
In glory's arms exultingly to meet—
A closing triumph, a majestic scene,
Where gazing nations watch the hero's mien,
As, undismayed amidst the tears of all,
He folds his mantle, regally to fall!
—Hush, fond enthusiast! Still, obscure, and lone,
Yet not less terrible because unknown,

Is the last hour of thousands: they retire
From life's thronged path, unnoticed to expire.
As the light leaf, whose fall to ruin bears
Some trembling insect's little world of cares,
Descends in silence—while around waves on
The mighty forest, reckless what is gone,—
Such is man's doom; and, ere an hour be flown,—
Start not, thou trifler!—such may be thine own.
But, as life's current in its ebb draws near
The shadowy gulf, there wakes a thought of fear,
A thrilling thought which, haply mocked before,
We fain would stifle—but it sleeps no more.
There are who fly its murmurs midst the throng
That join the masque of revelry and song.
Yet still Death's image, by its power restored,
Frowns midst the roses of the festal board;
And when deep shades o'er earth and ocean brood,
And the heart owns the might of solitude,
Is its low whisper heard—a note profound,
But wild and startling as the trumpet-sound
That bursts with sudden blast the dead repose
Of some proud city, stormed by midnight foes.

Oh! vainly Reason's scornful voice would prove
That life had naught to claim such lingering love,
And ask if e'er the captive, half unchained,
Clung to the links which yet his step restrained.
In vain Philosophy, with tranquil pride,
Would mock the feelings she perchance can hide,
Call up the countless armies of the dead,
Point to the pathway beaten by their tread,
And say—"What wouldst thou? Shall the fixed decree,
Made for creation, be reversed for *thee?*"

Poor feeble aid! Proud Stoic! ask not why—
It is enough that nature shrinks to die.
Enough—*that* horror, which thy words upbraid,
Is her dread penalty, and must be paid.
Search thy deep wisdom, solve the scarce defined
And mystic questions of the parting mind,
Half checked, half uttered: tell her what shall burst
In whelming grandeur on her vision first,
When freed from mortal films—what viewless world
Shall first receive her wing, but half unfurled—
What awful and unbodied beings guide
Her timid flight through regions yet untried;
Say if at once, her final doom to hear,
Before her God the trembler must appear,
Or wait that day of terror, when the sea
Shall yield its hidden dead, and heaven and earth shall flee?

Hast thou no answer? Then deride no more
The thoughts that shrink, yet cease not to explore
The unknown, the unseen, the future: though the heart,
As at unearthly sounds, before them start,
Though the frame shudder and the spirit sigh,
They have their source in immortality!
Whence, then, shall strength, which reason's aid denies,
An equal to the mortal conflict rise?
When, on the swift pale horse, whose lightning pace,
Where'er we fly, still wins the dreadful race,
The mighty rider comes—oh, whence shall aid
Be drawn to meet his rushing, undismayed?
Whence, but from thee, Messiah! Thou hast drained
The bitter cup, till not the dregs remained;
To thee the struggle and the pangs were known,
The mystic horror—all became thine own!

But did no hand celestial succour bring,
Till scorn and anguish haply lost their sting?
Came not the Archangel, in the final hour,
To arm thee with invulnerable power?
No, Son of God! upon thy sacred head
The shafts of wrath their tenfold fury shed,
From man averted—and thy path on high
Passed through the strait of fiercest agony;
For thus the Eternal, with propitious eyes,
Received the last, the almighty sacrifice.
But wake! be glad, ye nations! from the tomb
Is won the victory, and is fled the gloom;
The vale of death in conquest hath been trod.
Break forth in joy, ye ransomed! saith your God:
Swell ye the raptures of the song afar,
And hail with harps your bright and Morning Star.

He rose! The everlasting gates of day
Received the King of Glory on his way.
The hope, the comforter of those who wept,
And the first-fruits of them in Him that slept,
He rose, He triumphed! He will yet sustain
Frail nature sinking in the strife of pain.
Aided by Him, around the martyr's frame
When fiercely blazed a living shroud of flame,
Hath the firm soul exulted, and the voice
Raised the victorious hymn, and cried, Rejoice!
Aided by Him, though none the bed attend
Where the lone sufferer dies without a friend,
He whom the busy world shall miss no more
Than morn one dewdrop from her countless store,
Earth's most neglected child, with trusting heart,
Called to the hope of glory, shall depart!

And say, cold Sophist! if by thee bereft
Of that high hope, to misery what were left?
But for the vision of the days to be,
But for the comforter despised by thee,
Should we not wither at the Chastener's look,
Should we not sink beneath our God's rebuke,
When o'er our heads the desolating blast,
Fraught with inscrutable decrees, hath passed,
And the stern power who seeks the noblest prey
Hath called our fairest and our best away?
Should we not madden when our eyes behold
All that we loved in marble stillness cold,
No more responsive to our smile or sigh,
Fixed, frozen, silent—all mortality?
But for the promise, "All shall yet be well,"
Would not the spirit in its pangs rebel
Beneath such clouds as darkened when the hand
Of wrath lay heavy on our prostrate land;
And thou,* just lent thy gladdened isles to bless,
Then snatched from earth with all thy loveliness,
With all a nation's blessings on thy head,
O England's flower! wert gathered to the dead?
But thou didst teach us. Thou to every heart
Faith's lofty lesson didst thyself impart.
When fled the hope thro' all thy pangs which smiled,
When thy young bosom o'er thy lifeless child
Yearned with vain longings—still thy patient eye
To its last light beamed holy constancy.
Torn from a lot in cloudless sunshine cast,
Amidst those agonies—thy first and last,
Thy pale lip, quivering with convulsive throes,

* The Princess Charlotte.

Breathed not a plaint, and settled in repose ;
While bowed thy royal head to Him whose power
Spoke in the fiat of that midnight hour,
Who from the brightest vision of a throne,
Love, glory, empire, claimed thee for his own,
And spread such terror o'er the sea-girt coast,
As blasted Israel when her Ark was lost !

" It is the will of God ! "—yet, yet we hear
The words which closed thy beautiful career ;
Yet should we mourn thee in thy blest abode,
But for that thought—" It is the will of God ! "
Who shall arraign th' Eternal's dark decree
If not one murmur then escaped from thee ?
Oh ! still, though, vanishing without a trace,
Thou hast not left one scion of thy race,
Still may thy memory bloom our vales among,
Hallowed by freedom and enshrined in song !
Still may thy pure majestic spirit dwell
Bright on the isles which loved thy name so well,
Even as an angel, with presiding care,
To wake and guide thine own high virtues there.

For lo ! the hour when storm-presaging skies
Call on the watchers of the land to rise,
To set the sign of fire on every height,
And o'er the mountains rear with patriot might,
Prepared, if summoned, in its cause to die,
The banner of our faith, the Cross of victory!
By this hath England conquered. Field and flood
Have owned her sovereignty : alone she stood,
When chains o'er all the sceptred earth were thrown,
In high and holy singleness, alone,

But mighty in her God—and shall she now
Forget before the Omnipotent to bow?
From the bright fountain of her glory turn,
Or bid strange fire upon His altars burn?
No, severed land! midst rock and billows rude,
Throned in thy majesty of solitude,
Still in the deep asylum of thy breast
Shall the pure elements of greatness rest,
Virtue and faith, the tutelary powers
Thy hearths that hallow, and defend thy towers.

Still, where thy hamlet vales, O chosen isle!
In the soft beauty of their verdure smile,
Where yew and elm o'ershade the lowly fanes
That guard the peasant's records and remains,
May the blest echoes of the Sabbath-bell
Sweet on the quiet of the woodlands swell,
And from each cottage-dwelling of thy glades,
When starlight glimmers through the deepening shades,
Devotion's voice in choral hymns arise,
And bear the land's warm incense to the skies.
There may the mother, as with anxious joy
To heaven her lessons consecrate her boy,
Teach his young accent still the immortal lays
Of Zion's bards, in inspiration's days,
When angels, whispering through the cedar shade,
Prophetic tones to Judah's harp conveyed;
And as, her soul all glistening in her eyes,
She bids the prayer of infancy arise,
Tell of His name who left his throne on high,
Earth's lowliest lot to bear and sanctify,
His lot divine, by keenest anguish tried,
And fondly say—"My child, for thee He died!"

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

THE TWO MONUMENTS

"Oh! blest are they who live and die like 'him,'
Loved with such love, and with such sorrow mourned!"
WORDSWORTH.

BANNERS hung drooping from on high
In a dim cathedral's nave,
Making a gorgeous canopy
O'er a noble, noble grave.

And a marble warrior's form beneath,
With helm and crest arrayed,
As on his battle-bed of death,
Lay in their crimson shade.

Triumph yet lingered in his eye,
Ere by the dark night sealed;
And his head was pillowed haughtily
On standard and on shield.

And shadowing that proud trophy-pile
With the glory of his wing,
An eagle sat—yet seemed the while
Panting through heaven to spring.

He sat upon a shivered lance,
There by the sculptor bound;
But in the light of his lifted glance
Was that which scorned the ground.

And a burning flood of gem-like hues,
From a storied window poured,
There fell, there centred, to suffuse
The conqueror and his sword.

A flood of hues—but one rich dye
O'er all supremely spread,
With a purple robe of royalty
Mantling the mighty dead.

Meet was that robe for him whose name
Was a trumpet-note in war,
His pathway still the march of fame,
His eye the battle-star.

But faintly, tenderly was thrown,
From the coloured light, one ray,
Where a low and pale memorial-stone
By the couch of glory lay.

Few were the fond words chiselled there,
Mourning for parted worth;
But the very heart of love and prayer
Had given their sweetness forth.

They spoke of one whose life had been
As a hidden streamlet's course,
Bearing on health and joy unseen
From its clear mountain-source:

Whose young pure memory, lying deep
Midst rock and wood and hill,
Dwelt in the homes where poor men sleep,
A soft light, meek and still:

Whose gentle voice, too early called
Unto Music's land away,
Had won for God the earth's, enthralled
By words of silvery sway.

These were his victories—yet, enrolled
In no high song of fame,
The pastor of the mountain-fold
Left but to heaven his name.

To heaven, and to the peasant's hearth,
A blessed household-sound;
And finding lowly love on earth,
Enough, enough he found.

Bright and more bright before me gleamed
That sainted image still,
Till one sweet moonlight memory seemed
The regal fane to fill.

Oh! how my silent spirit turned
From those proud trophies nigh!
How my full heart within me burned
Like Him to live and die!

THE COTTAGE GIRL

A CHILD beside a hamlet's fount at play,
Her fair face laughing at the sunny day;
A gush of waters tremulously bright,
Kindling the air to gladness with their light;
And a soft gloom beyond of summer trees,
Darkening the turf; and, shadowed o'er by these,
A low dim woodland cottage—this was all!
What had the scene for memory to recall
With a fond look of love? What secret spell
With the heart's pictures made its image dwell?
—What but the spirit of the joyous child,
That freshly forth o'er stream and verdure smiled,
Casting upon the common things of earth
A brightness, born and gone with infant mirth!

ON A PICTURE OF CHRIST BEARING THE CROSS

PAINTED BY VELASQUEZ

BY the dark stillness brooding in the sky,
  Holiest of sufferers! round thy path of woe,
And by the weight of mortal agony
  Laid on thy drooping form and pale meek brow,
My heart was awed: the burden of thy pain
Sank on me with a mystery and a chain.

I looked once more—and, as the virtue shed
  Forth from thy robe of old, so fell a ray
Of victory from thy mien ; and round thy head,
  The halo, melting spirit-like away,
Seemed of the very soul's bright rising born,
To glorify all sorrow, shame, and scorn.

And upwards, thro' transparent darkness gleaming,
  Gazed in mute reverence woman's earnest eye,
Lit, as a vase whence inward light is streaming,
  With quenchless faith and deep love's fervency,
Gathering, like incense round some dim-veiled shrine,
About the form so mournfully divine.

Oh ! let Thine image, as even then it rose,
  Live in my soul for ever, calm and clear,
Making itself a temple of repose,
  Beyond the breath of human hope or fear—
A holy place, where through all storms may lie
One living beam of dayspring from on high.

COMMUNINGS WITH THOUGHT

"Could we but keep our spirits to that height,
We might be happy ; but this clay will sink
Its spark immortal."—Byron.

Return, my thoughts !—come home.
[illegible]ld and winged ! what do ye o'er the deep ?
[illegible]herefore thus the abyss of time o'ersweep,
[illegible] birds the ocean-foam ?

Swifter than shooting-star,
Swifter than lances of the northern-light,
Upspringing through the purple heaven of night,
Hath been your course afar!

Through the bright battle-clime,
Where laurel boughs make dim the Grecian streams,
And reeds are whispering of heroic themes,
By temples of old time:

Through the north's ancient halls,
Where banners thrill'd of yore, where harp-strings rung;
But grass waves now o'er those that fought and sung,
Hearth-light hath left their walls!

Through forests old and dim,
Where o'er the leaves dread magic seems to brood;
And sometimes on the haunted solitude
Rises the pilgrim's hymn:

Or where some fountain lies,
With lotus-cups thro' orient spice-woods gleaming:
There have ye been, ye wanderers! idly dreaming
Of man's lost paradise!

Return, my thoughts!—return!
Cares wait your presence in life's daily track,
And voices, not of music, call you back—
Harsh voices, cold and stern!

Oh, no! return ye not!
Still farther, loftier, let your soarings be!
Go, bring me strength from journeyings bright and free,
O'er many a haunted spot.

Go! seek the martyr's grave,
Midst the old mountains and the deserts vast;
Or, through the ruined cities of the past,
Follow the wise and brave!

Go! visit cell and shrine,
Where woman hath endured, thro' wrong, thro' scorn,
Uncheered by fame, yet silently upborne
By promptings more divine!

Go, shoot the gulf of death!
Track the pure spirit where no chain can bind,
Where the heart's boundless love its rest may find,
Where the storm sends no breath!

Higher, and yet more high!
Shake off the cumbering chain which earth would lay
On your victorious wings: mount, mount!—your way
Is through eternity!

TROUBADOUR SONG

They reared no trophy o'er his grave,
They bade no requiem flow;
What left they there to tell the brave
That a warrior sleeps below?

A shivered spear, a cloven shield,
A helm with its white plume torn,
And a blood-stained turf on the fatal field,
Where a chief to his rest was borne.

He lies not where his fathers sleep,
But who hath a tomb more proud?
For the Syrian wilds his record keep,
And a banner is his shroud.

THE BATTLE-FIELD

I LOOKED on the field where the battle was spread,
When thousands stood forth in their glancing array;
And the beam from the steel of the valiant was shed
Thro' the dun-rolling clouds that o'ershadowed the fray.

I saw the dark forest of lances appear,
As the ears of the harvest unnumbered they stood;
I heard the stern shout as the foemen drew near,
Like the storm that lays low the proud pines of the wood.

Afar the harsh notes of the war-drum were rolled,
Uprousing the wolf from the depth of his lair;
On high to the gust streamed the banner's red fold,
O'er the death-close of hate and the scowl of despair.

I looked on the field of contention again,
When the sabre was sheathed and the tempest had past;
The wild weed and thistle grew rank on the plain,
And the fern softly sighed in the low wailing blast.

Unmoved lay the lake in its hour of repose,
And bright shone the stars thro' the sky's deepen'd blue;
And sweetly the song of the night-bird arose,
Where the fox-glove lay gemmed with its pearl-drops of dew.

But where swept the ranks of that dark frowning host,
As the ocean in might, as the storm-cloud in speed!
Where now are the thunders of victory's boast—
The slayer's dread wrath and the strength of the steed!

Not a time-wasted cross, not a mouldering stone,
To mark the lone scene of their shame or their pride;
One grass-covered mound told the traveller alone
Where thousands lay down in their anguish, and died!

O Glory! behold thy famed guerdon's extent:
For this, toil thy slaves thro' their earth-wasting lot—
A name like the mist, when the night-beams are spent:
A grave with its tenants unwept and forgot!

A PENITENT'S RETURN

"Can guilt or misery ever enter here?
Ah, no! the spirit of domestic peace,
Though calm and gentle as the brooding dove,
And ever murmuring forth a quiet song,
Guards, powerful as the sword of cherubim,
The hallowed porch. She hath a heavenly smile,
That sinks into the sullen soul of Vice,
And wins him o'er to virtue."—WILSON.

My father's house once more,
In its own moonlight beauty! Yet around,
Something, amidst the dewy calm profound,
Broods, never marked before.

Is it the brooding night,
Is it the shivery creeping on the air,
That makes the home so tranquil and so fair,
O'erwhelming to my sight?

All solemnised it seems,
And stilled and darkened in each time-worn hue,
Since the rich clustering roses met my view,
As now, by starry gleams.

And this high elm, where last
I stood and lingered, where my sisters made
Our mother's bower—I deemed not that it cast
So far and dark a shade.

How spirit-like a tone
Sighs through yon tree! My father's place was there
At evening hours, while soft winds waved his hair.
Now those grey locks are gone!

My soul grows faint with fear,
Even as if angel-steps had marked the sod.
I tremble where I move. The voice of God
Is in the foliage here!

Is it indeed the night
That makes my home so awful? Faithless-hearted!
'Tis that from thine own bosom hath departed
The inborn gladdening light.

No outward thing is changed;
Only the joy of purity is fled,
And, long from nature's melodies estranged,
Thou hear'st their tones with dread.

Therefore the calm abode,
By thy dark spirit, is o'erhung with shade;
And therefore, in the leaves, the voice of God
Makes thy sick heart afraid.

The night-flowers round that door
Still breathe pure fragrance on the untainted air;
Thou, thou alone art worthy now no more
To pass and rest thee there.

And must I turn away?
Hark, hark! It is my mother's voice I hear—
Sadder than once it seemed, yet soft and clear.
Doth she not seem to pray?

My name!—I caught the sound:
Oh, blessed tone of love—the deep, the mild!
Mother! my mother! now receive thy child:
Take back the lost and found!

A THOUGHT OF PARADISE

"We receive but what we give.
And in our life alone does nature live;
Ours is her wedding-garment, ours her shroud;
And, would we aught behold of higher worth
Than that inanimate cold world allowed
To the poor loveless ever-anxious crowd,
Ah! from the soul itself must issue forth
A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud,
Enveloping the earth;
And from the soul itself must there be sent
A sweet and potent voice of its own birth,
Of all sweet sounds the life and element."—COLERIDGE.

GREEN spot of holy ground!
If thou couldst yet be found,
Far in deep woods, with all thy starry flowers;
If not one sullying breath
Of time, or change, or death,
Had touched the vernal glory of thy bowers;

Might our tired pilgrim-feet,
Worn by the desert's heat,
On the bright freshness of thy turf repose;
Might our eyes wander there
Through heaven's transparent air,
And rest on colours of the immortal rose;

Say, would thy balmy skies
And fountain-melodies
Our heritage of lost delight restore?
Could thy soft honey-dews
Through all our veins diffuse
The early child-like trustful sleep once more?

And might we, in the shade
By thy tall cedars made,
With angel-voices high communion hold?
Would their sweet solemn tone
Give back the music gone,
Our being's harmony, so jarred of old?

Oh no!—thy sunny hours
Might come with blossom-showers,
All thy young leaves to spirit-lyres might thrill;
But we—should we not bring
Into thy realms of spring
The shadows of our souls to haunt us still?

What could thy flowers and airs
Do for our earth-born cares?
Would the world's chain melt off and leave us free?
No!—past each living stream,
Still would some fever-dream
Track the lorn wanderers, meet no more for thee!

Should we not shrink with fear
If angel-steps were near,
Feeling our burdened souls within us die?
How might our passions brook
The still and searching look,
The starlike glance of seraph purity?

Thy golden-fruited grove
Was not for pining love;
Vain sadness would but dim thy crystal skies.
Oh! thou wert but a part
Of what man's exiled heart
Hath lost—the dower of *inborn* Paradise!

LET US DEPART!

[It is mentioned by Josephus, that, a short time previous t destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, the priests, goi night into the inner court of the Temple to perform their s ministrations at the feast of Pentecost, felt a quaking, and h a rushing noise, and, after that, a sound as of a great n tude saying, "Let us depart hence!"]

NIGHT hung on Salem's towers,
And a brooding hush profound
Lay where the Roman eagle shone
High o'er the tents around—

The tents that rose by thousands,
In the moonlight glimmering pale;
Like white waves of a frozen sea
Filling an Alpine vale.

And the Temple's massy shadow
Fell broad and dark and still,
In peace—as if the Holy One
Yet watched his chosen hill.

But a fearful sound was heard
In that old fane's deepest heart,
As if mighty wings rushed by,
And a dread voice raised the cry,
"*Let us depart!*"

Within the fated city
Even then fierce discord raved,
Though o'er night's heaven the comet-sword
Its vengeful token waved.

There were shouts of kindred warfare
Through the dark streets ringing high,
Though every sign was full which told
Of the bloody vintage nigh;

Though the wild red spears and arrows
Of many a meteor host
Went flashing o'er the holy stars,
In the sky now seen, now lost.

And that fearful sound was heard
In the Temple's deepest heart,
As if mighty wings rushed by,
And a voice cried mournfully,
"*Let us depart!*"

But within the fated city
There was revelry that night—
The wine-cup and the timbrel-note,
And the blaze of banquet-light.

The footsteps of the dancer
Went bounding through the hall,
And the music of the dulcimer
Summoned to festival:

While the clash of brother-weapons
Made lightning in the air,
And the dying at the palace gates
Lay down in their despair;

And that fearful sound was heard
At the Temple's thrilling heart,
As if mighty wings rushed by,
And a dread voice raised the cry,
"*Let us depart!*"

THE SONG OF PENITENCE

UNFINISHED

He passed from earth
Without his fame. The calm pure starry fame
He might have won, to guide on radiantly
Full many a noble soul,—he sought it not;
And even like brief and barren lightning, passed
The wayward child of genius. And the songs

Which his wild spirit, in the pride of life,
Had showered forth recklessly, as ocean-waves
Fling up their treasures mingled with dark weed,
They died before him;—they were wingèd seed
Scattered afar, and, falling on the rock
Of the world's heart, had perished. One alone,
One fervent mournful supplicating strain,
The deep beseeching of a stricken breast,
Survived the vainly-gifted. In the souls
Of the kind few that loved him, with a love
Faithful to even its disappointed hope,
That song of tears found root, and by their hearths
Full oft, in low and reverential tones,
Filled with the piety of tenderness,
Is murmured to their children, when his name
On some faint harp-string of remembrance falls,
Far from the world's rude voices, far away.
Oh, hear, and judge him gently! 'Twas his last.

I COME alone, and faint I come—
To nature's arms I flee;
The green woods take their wanderer home,
But Thou, O Father! may I turn to thee?

The earliest odour of the flower,
The bird's first song is thine;
Father in heaven! my dayspring's hour
Poured its vain incense on another shrine.

Therefore my childhood's once-loved scene
Around me faded lies;
Therefore, remembering what hath been,
I ask, is this mine early paradise?

It is, it is—but Thou art gone;
Or if the trembling shade
Breathe yet of thee, with altered tone
Thy solemn whisper shakes a heart dismayed.

THE ENGLISH BOY

"Go, call thy sons; instruct them what a debt
They owe their ancestors: and make them aware
To pay it, by transmitting down entire
Those sacred rights to which themselves were born."
AKENSIDE.

Look from the ancient mountains down,
My noble English boy!
Thy country's fields around thee gleam
In sunlight and in joy.

Ages have rolled since foeman's march
Passed o'er that old firm sod;
For well the land hath fealty held
To freedom and to God!

Gaze proudly on, my English boy!
And let thy kindling mind
Drink in the spirit of high thought
From every chainless wind.

There, in the shadow of old Time,
The halls beneath thee lie
Which poured forth to the fields of yore
Our England's chivalry.

How bravely and how solemnly
They stand, midst oak and yew,
Whence Cressy's yeomen haply framed
The bow, in battle true;

And round their walls the good swords hang
Whose faith knew no alloy,
And shields of knighthood, pure from stain.
Gaze on, my English boy!

Gaze where the hamlet's ivied church
Gleams by the antique elm,
Or where the minster lifts the cross
High through the air's blue realm.

Martyrs have showered their free heart's blood
That England's prayer might rise,
From those grey fanes of thoughtful years,
Unfettered to the skies.

Along their aisles, beneath their trees,
This earth's most glorious dust,
Once fired with valour, wisdom, song,
Is laid in holy trust.

Gaze on—gaze farther, farther yet—
My gallant English boy!
Yon blue sea bears thy country's flag,
The billow's pride and joy.

Those waves in many a fight have closed
Above her faithful dead;
That red-cross flag victoriously
Hath floated o'er their bed.

They perished—this green turf to keep
By hostile tread unstained,
These nightly halls inviolate,
Those churches unprofaned.

And high and clear their memory's light
Along our shore is set,
And many an answering beacon-fire
Shall there be kindled yet.

Lift up thy heart, my English boy!
And pray, like them to stand,
Should God so summon thee, to guard
The altars of the land.

TO THE BLUE ANEMONE

FLOWER of starry clearness bright!
Quivering urn of coloured light!
Hast thou drawn thy cup's rich dye
From the intenseness of the sky?
From a long, long fervent gaze
Through the year's first golden days,
Up that blue and silent deep,
Where, like things of sculptured sleep,
Alabaster clouds repose,
With the sunshine on their snows?
Thither was thy heart's love turning,
Like a censer ever burning,
Till the purple heavens in thee
Set their smile, Anemone?

Or can those warm tints be caught
Each from some quick glow of thought?
So much of bright soul there seems
In thy bendings and thy gleams,
So much thy sweet life resembles
That which feels and weeps and trembles,
I could deem thee spirit-filled,
As a reed by music thrilled.
When thy being I behold
To each loving breath unfold,
Or, like woman's willowy form,
Shrink from the gathering storm,
I could ask a voice from thee,
Delicate Anemone!

Flower! thou seem'st not born to die
With thy radiant purity,
But to melt in air away,
Mingling with the soft Spring-day,
When the crystal heavens are still,
And faint azure veils each hill,
And the lime-leaf doth not move,
Save to songs that stir the grove,
And earth all glorified is seen,
As imaged in some lake serene;
—Then thy vanishing should be,
Pure and meek Anemone!

Flower! the laurel still may shed
Brightness round the victor's head;
And the rose in beauty's hair
Still its festal glory wear;
And the willow-leaves drop o'er
Brows which love sustains no more:

But by living rays refined,
Thou, the trembler of the wind,
Thou, the spiritual flower,
Sentient of each breeze and shower,
Thou, rejoicing in the skies,
And transpierced with all their dyes;
Breathing vase, with light o'erflowing,
Gem-like to thy centre glowing,
Thou the poet's type shalt be,
Flower of soul, Anemone!

THE HUGUENOT'S FAREWELL

I STAND upon the threshold stone
Of mine ancestral hall;
I hear my native river moan;
I see the night o'er my old forests fall.

I look round on the darkening vale
That saw my childhood's plays;
The low wind in its rising wail
Hath a strange tone, a sound of other days.

But I must rule my swelling breast:
A sign is in the sky!
Bright o'er yon grey rock's eagle-nest
Shines forth a warning star—it bids me fly.

My father's sword is in my hand,
His deep voice haunts mine ear;
He tells me of the noble band
Whose lives have left a brooding glory here.

He bids their offspring guard from stain
Their pure and lofty faith;
And yield up all things, to maintain
The cause for which they girt themselves to death.

And I obey. I leave their towers
Unto the stranger's tread,
Unto the creeping grass and flowers,
Unto the fading pictures of the dead.

I leave their shields to slow decay,
Their banners to the dust:
I go, and only bear away
Their old majestic name—a solemn trust!

I go up to the ancient hills,
Where chains may never be,
Where leap in joy the torrent-rills,
Where man may worship God, alone and free.

There shall an altar and a camp
Impregnably arise;
There shall be lit a quenchless lamp,
To shine unwavering through the open skies.

And song shall midst the rocks be heard,
And fearless prayer ascend;
While, thrilling to God's holy word,
The mountain-pines in adoration bend.

And there the burning heart no more
Its deep thought shall suppress,
But the long-buried truth shall pour
Free currents thence, amidst the wilderness.

Then fare thee well, my mother's bower!
Farewell, my father's hearth!—
Perish my home! where lawless power
Hath rent the tie of love to native earth.

Perish! let deathlike silence fall
Upon the lone abode,
Spread fast, dark ivy! spread thy pall;—
I go up to the mountains with my God.

THE WATER-LILY

"The Water-Lilies, that are serene in the calm clear water, but no less serene among the black and scowling waves."—WILSON.

Oh! beautiful thou art,
Thou sculpture-like and stately river-queen!
Crowning the depths, as with the light serene
Of a pure heart.

Bright lily of the wave!
Rising in fearless grace with every swell,
Thou seem'st as if a spirit meekly brave
Dwelt in thy cell:

Lifting alike thy head
Of placid beauty, feminine yet free,
Whether with foam or pictured azure spread
The waters be.

What is like thee, fair flower,
The gentle and the firm! thus bearing up
To the blue sky that alabaster cup,
As to the shower?

Oh! love is most like thee,
The love of woman! quivering to the blast
Through every nerve, yet rooted deep and fast,
Midst life's dark sea.

And faith—oh, is not faith
Like thee, too, lily! springing into light,
Still buoyantly, above the billows' might,
Through the storm's breath?

Yes! linked with such high thought,
Flower! let thine image in my bosom lie;
Till something there of its own purity
And peace be wrought—

Something yet more divine
Than the clear pearly virgin lustre shed
Forth from thy breast upon the river's bed,
As from a shrine.

THE MEMORY OF THE DEAD

Forget them not!—though now their name
Be but a mournful sound,
Though by the hearth its utterance claim
A stillness round.

Though for their sake this earth no more
As it hath been may be,
And shadows never marked before
Brood o'er each tree ;

And though their image dim the sky,
Yet, yet forget them not ;
Nor, where their love and life went by,
Forsake the spot !

They have a breathing influence there,
A charm not elsewhere found ;
Sad—yet it sanctifies the air,
The stream, the ground.

Then, though the wind an altered tone
Through the young foliage bear,
Though every flower of something gone
A tinge may wear.

Oh ! fly it not ! No fruitless grief,
Thus in their presence felt,
A record links to every leaf
There, where they dwelt.

Still trace the path which knew their tread,
Still tend the garden-bower,
Still commune with the holy dead
In each lone hour !

The holy dead !—oh ! blest we are
That we may call them so,
And to their image look afar
Through all our woe !

Blest, that the things they loved on earth
As relics we may hold,
That wake sweet thoughts of parted worth
By springs untold!

Blest, that a deep and chastening power
Thus o'er our souls is given,
If but to bird or song or flower,
Yet all for heaven!

EVENING SONG OF THE TYROLESE PEASANTS

Come to the sunset tree!
The day is past and gone;
The woodman's axe lies free,
And the reaper's work is done.

The twilight star to heaven,
And the summer dew to flowers,
And rest to us, is given
By the cool soft evening hours.

Sweet is the hour of rest!
Pleasant the wind's low sigh,
And the gleaming of the west,
And the turf whereon we lie;

When the burden and the heat
Of labour's task are o'er,
And kindly voices greet
The tired one at his door.

Come to the sunset tree!
The day is past and gone;
The woodman's axe lies free,
And the reaper's work is done.

Yes! tuneful is the sound
That dwells in whispering boughs;
Welcome the freshness round,
And the gale that fans our brows!

But rest more sweet and still
Than ever nightfall gave,
Our yearning hearts shall fill
In the world beyond the grave.

There shall no tempest blow,
No scorching noontide heat;
There shall be no more snow,*
No weary wandering feet.

So we lift our trusting eyes
From the hills our fathers trode,
To the quiet of the skies,
To the Sabbath of our God.

Come to the sunset tree!
The day is past and gone;
The woodman's axe lies free,
And the reaper's work is done.

* "Wohl ihm, er ist hingegangen
Wo *kein Schnee* mehr ist."—SCHILLER.

THE LAMENT OF ALCYONE

I

By the blue waters—the restless ocean-waters,
Restless as they with their many-flashing surges,
Lonely I wander, weeping for my lost one!

I pine for thee through all the joyless day—
Through the long night I pine: the golden sun
Looks dim since thou hast left me, and the spring
Seems but to weep. Where art thou, my beloved?
Night after night, in fond hope vigilant,
By the old temple on the breezy cliff,
These hands have heaped the watch-fire, till it stream'd
Red o'er the shining columns—darkly red
Along the crested billows—but in vain:
Thy white sail comes not from the distant isles—
Yet thou wert faithful ever. Oh! the deep
Hath shut above thy head—that graceful head!
The sea-weed mingles with thy clustering locks;
The white sail never will bring back the loved!

By the blue waters—the restless ocean-waters,
Restless as they with their many-flashing surges,
Lonely I wander, weeping for my lost one!

II

Where art thou?—where? Had I but lingering press'd
On thy cold lips the last long kiss—but smoothed
The parted ringlets of thy shining hair

With love's fond youth, my heart's cry had been stilled
Into a voiceless grief: I would have strewed
With all the pale flowers of the vernal woods—
White violets and the mournful hyacinth
And frail anemone—thy marble brow,
In slumber beautiful! I would have heaped
Sweet boughs and precious odours on thy pyre,
And with mine own shorn tresses hung thine urn.
And many a garland of the pallid rose.
But thou liest far away! No funeral chant,
Save the wild moaning of the wave, is thine:
No pyre—save, haply, some long-buried wreck;
Thou that wert fairest—thou that wert most loved!

By the blue waters—the restless ocean-waters,
Restless as they with their many-flashing surges,
Lonely I wander, weeping for my lost one!

III

Come, in the dreamy shadow of the night,
And speak to me! Even though thy voice be changed,
My heart would know it still. Oh, speak to me!
And say if yet, in some dim far-off world,
Which knows not how the festal sunshine burns,
If yet, in some pale mead of asphodel,
We two shall meet again! Oh, I would quit
The day rejoicingly, the rosy light,
All the rich flowers and fountains musical,
And sweet familiar melodies of earth,
To dwell with thee below! Thou answerest not:
The powers whom I have called upon are mute:
The voices buried in old whispery caves,
And by lone river-sources, and amidst

The gloom and mystery of dark prophet-oaks,
The wood-god's haunt—they give me no reply!
All silent—heaven and earth! For evermore
From the deserted mountains thou art gone—
For ever from the melancholy groves,
Whose laurels wail thee with a shivering sound.
And I—I pine through all the joyous day,
Through the long night I pine—as fondly pines
The night's own bird, dissolving her lorn life
To song in moonlight woods. Thou hear'st me not!
The heavens are pitiless to human tears:
The deep sea-darkness is about thy head;
The white sail never will bring back the loved!

By the blue waters—the restless ocean-waters,
Restless as they with their many-flashing surges,
Lonely I wander, weeping for my lost one!

THE ROD OF AARON

NUMBERS, XVII. 8.

Was it the sigh of the southern gale
That flushed the almond bough?
Brightest and first the young spring to hail,
Still its red blossoms glow.

Was it the sunshine that woke its flowers
With a kindling look of love?
Oh! far and deep, and through hidden bowers,
That smile of heaven can rove.

No! from the breeze and the living light
Shut was the sapless rod;
But it felt in the stillness a secret might,
And thrilled to the breath of God.

Even so may that breath, like the vernal air,
O'er our glad spirits move;
And all such things as are good and fair
Be the blossoms, its track that prove.

THE FOUNTAIN OF MARAH

"And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter. And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? And he cried unto the Lord, and the Lord showed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet."—EXODUS, XV. 23-25.

WHERE is the tree the prophet threw
Into the bitter wave?
Left it no scion where it grew,
The thirsting soul to save?

Hath nature lost the hidden power
Its precious foliage shed?
Is there no distant Eastern bower
With such sweet leaves o'erspread?

Nay, wherefore ask?—since gifts are ours
Which yet may well imbue
Earth's many troubled founts with showers
Of heaven's own balmy dew.

Oh! mingled with the cup of grief
  Let faith's deep spirit be!
And every prayer shall win a leaf
  From that bless'd healing tree!

HE WALKED WITH GOD

GENESIS, XXV. 4.

He walked with God in holy joy,
  While yet his days were few;
The deep glad spirit of the boy
  To love and reverence grew.
Whether, each nightly star to count,
  The ancient hills he trode,
Or sought the flowers by stream and fount—
  Alike he walked with God.

The graver noon of manhood came,
  The full of cares and fears;
One voice was in his heart—the same
  It heard through childhood's years.
Amidst fair tents and flocks and swains,
  O'er his green pasture-sod,
A shepherd-king on Eastern plains—
  The patriarch walked with God.

And calmly, brightly that pure life
  Melted from earth away;
No cloud it knew, no parting strife,
  No sorrowful decay;

He bowed him not, like all beside,
  Unto the spoiler's rod,
But joined at once the glorified,
  Where angels walk with God.

So let us walk! The night must come
  To us that comes to all;
We through the darkness must go home,
  Hearing the trumpet's call.
Closed is the path for evermore
  Which without death he trode;
Not so that way, wherein of yore
  His footsteps walked with God!

THE VOICE OF GOD

"I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid."—Gen. iii. 10.

Amidst the thrilling leaves, Thy voice
  At evening's fall drew near;
Father! and did not man rejoice
  That blessèd sound to hear?

Did not his heart within him burn,
  Touched by the solemn tone?
Not so!—for, never to return,
  Its purity was gone.

Therefore, midst holy stream and bower,
  His spirit shook with dread,
And called the cedars, in that hour,
  To veil his conscious head.

Oh ! in each wind, each fountain-flow,
Each whisper of the shade,
Grant me, my God ! thy voice to know,
And not to be afraid !

ELYSIUM

["In the Elysium of the ancients, we find none but heroes and persons who had either been fortunate or distinguished on earth; the children, and apparently the slaves and lower classes—that is to say, Poverty, Misfortune, and Innocence—were banished to the Infernal Regions."—CHATEAUBRIAND, *Génie du Christianisme.*]

Fair wert thou in the dreams
Of elder time, thou land of glorious flowers
And summer winds and low-toned silvery streams,
Dim with the shadows of thy laurel bowers,
Where, as they passed, bright hours
Left no faint sense of parting, such as clings
To earthly love, and joy in loveliest things !

Fair wert thou, with the light
On thy blue hills and sleepy waters cast
From purple skies ne'er deepening into night,
Yet soft, as if each moment were their last
Of glory, fading fast
Along the mountains !—but thy golden day
Was not as those that warn us of decay.

And ever, through thy shades,
A swell of deep Æolian sound went by
From fountain-voices in their secret glades,
And low reed-whispers, making sweet reply
To summer's breezy sigh,
And young leaves trembling to the wind's light breath,
Which ne'er had touched them with a hue of death.

And the transparent sky
Rang as a dome, all thrilling to the strain
Of harps that midst the woods made harmony,
Solemn and sweet; yet troubling not the brain
With dreams and yearnings vain,
And dim remembrances, that still draw birth
From the bewildering music of the earth.

And who, with silent tread,
Moved o'er the plains of waving asphodel?
Called from the dim procession of the dead,
Who midst the shadowy amaranth-bowers might dwell,
And listen to the swell
Of those majestic hymn-notes, and inhale
The spirit wandering in the immortal gale?

They of the sword, whose praise,
With the bright wine, at nations' feasts went round!
They of the lyre, whose unforgotten lays
Forth on the winds had sent their mighty sound,
And in all regions found
Their echoes midst the mountains!—and become
In man's deep heart as voices of his home!

They of the daring thought!
Daring and powerful, yet to dust allied—
Whose flight thro' stars and seas and depths had sought
The soul's far birthplace—but without a guide!
Sages and seers, who died,
And left the world their high mysterious dreams,
Born midst the olive woods by Grecian streams.

But the most loved are they
Of whom fame speaks not with her clarion-voice,
In regal halls! The shades o'erhang their way;
The vale, with its deep fountains, is their choice,
And gentle hearts rejoice
Around their steps; till silently they die,
As a stream shrinks from summer's burning eye.

And these - of whose abode,
Midst her green valleys, earth retained no trace,
Save a flower springing from their burial-sod,
A shade of sadness on some kindred face,
A dim and vacant place
In some sweet home;—thou hadst no wreaths for these,
Thou sunny land, with all thy deathless trees!

The peasant at his door
Might sink to die when vintage-feasts were spread,
And songs on every wind. From thy bright shore
No lovelier vision floated round his head—
Thou wert for nobler dead!
He heard the bounding steps which round him fell,
And sighed to bid the festal sun farewell.

The slave, whose very tears
Were a forbidden luxury, and whose breast
Kept the mute woes and burning thoughts of years,
As embers in a burial-urn compressed;
He might not be thy guest!
No gentle breathings from thy distant sky
Came o'er his path, and whispered "Liberty!"

Calm, on its leaf-strewn bier,
Unlike a gift of Nature to Decay,
Too rose-like still, too beautiful, too dear,
The child at rest before the mother lay,
Even so to pass away,
With its bright smile! Elysium! what wert thou
To her who wept o'er that young slumberer's brow?

Thou hadst no home, green land!
For the fair creature from her bosom gone,
With life's fresh flowers just opening in its hand,
And all the lovely thoughts and dreams unknown,
Which in its clear eye shone
Like spring's first wakening! But that light was past:
Where went the dewdrop swept before the blast?

Not where thy soft winds played,
Not where thy waters lay in glassy sleep!
Fade with thy bowers, thou land of Visions, fade!
From thee no voice came o'er the gloomy deep,
And bade man cease to weep.
Fade, with the amaranth plain, the myrtle grove,
Which could not yield one hope to sorrowing love!

THE FUNERAL GENIUS

AN ANCIENT STATUE

["DEBOUT, couronné de fleurs, les bras élevés et posés sur sa tête, et le dos appuyé contre un pin, ce génie semble exprimer par son attitude le repos des morts. Les bas-reliefs des tombeaux offrent souvent des figures semblables."—VISCONTI, *Description des Antiques du Musée Royal.*]

THOU shouldst be looked on when the starlight falls
Through the blue stillness of the summer air,
Not by the torch-fire wavering on the walls—
It hath too fitful and too wild a glare:
And thou!—thy rest, the soft, the lovely, seems
To ask light steps, that will not break its dreams.

Flowers are upon thy brow; for so the dead
Were crown'd of old, with pale spring-flowers like these:
Sleep on thine eye hath sunk, yet softly shed
As from the wing of some faint southern breeze:
And the pine-boughs o'ershadow thee with gloom,
Which of the grove seems breathing—not the tomb.

They feared not death, whose calm and gracious thought
Of the last hour hath settled thus in thee!
They who thy wreath of pallid roses wrought,
And laid thy head against the forest tree,
As that of one by music's dreamy close
On the wood-violets lulled to deep repose.

They feared not death !—yet who shall say his touch
  Thus lightly falls on gentle things and fair?
Doth he bestow, or will he leave so much
  Of tender beauty as thy features wear?
Thou sleeper of the bower, on whose young eyes
So still a night, a night of summer, lies !

Had they seen aught like thee? Did some fair boy
  Thus, with his graceful hair, before them rest—
His graceful hair, no more to wave in joy,
  But drooping, as with heavy dews oppressed;
And his eye veiled so softly by its fringe,
And his lip faded to the white-rose tinge?

Oh ! happy, if to them the one dread hour
  Made known its lessons from a brow like thine !
If all their knowledge of the spoiler's power
  Came by a look so tranquilly divine !
Let him who *thus* hath seen the lovely part,
Hold well that image to his thoughtful heart.

But thou, fair slumberer ! was there less of woe,
  Or love, or terror, in the days of old,
That men poured out their gladdening spirit's flow,
  Like sunshine, on the desolate and cold,
And gave thy semblance to the shadowy king,
Who for deep souls had then a deeper sting?

In the dark bosom of the earth they laid
  Far more than we—for loftier faith is ours !
Their gems were lost in ashes—yet they made
  The grave a place of beauty and of flowers,
With fragrant wreaths and summer boughs arrayed,
[illegible]vely sculpture gleaming through the shade.

Is it for us a darker gloom to shed
O'er its dim precincts? Do we not intrust
But for a time its chambers with our dead,
And strew immortal seed upon the dust?
Why should we dwell on that which lies beneath,
When living light hath touched the brow of death?

A DIRGE

WEEP for the early lost!
How many flowers were mingled in the crown
Thus with the lovely to the grave gone down,
Even when life promised most!
How many hopes have withered! They that bow
To Heaven's dread will, feel all its mysteries now.

Did the young mother's eye
Behold her child, and close upon the day,
Ere from its glance the awakening spirit's ray
In sunshine could reply?
Then look for clouds to dim the fairest morn!
Oh! strong is faith, if woe like this be borne.

For there is hushed on earth
A voice of gladness—there is veiled a face,
Whose parting leaves a dark and silent place
By the once joyous hearth:
A smile hath passed, which filled its home with light,
A soul, whose beauty made that smile so bright!

But there *is* power with faith!
Power, even though nature o'er the untimely grave
Must weep, when God resumes the gem He gave:
For sorrow comes of Death,
And with a yearning heart we linger on,
When they whose glance unlocked its founts are gone.

But glory from the dust,
And praise to Him, the merciful, for those
On whose bright memory love may still repose
With an immortal trust!
Praise for the dead, who leave us, when they part,
Such hope as she hath left—"the pure in heart!"

DIRGE OF A CHILD

No bitter tears for thee be shed,
Blossom of being! seen and gone;
With flowers alone we strew thy bed,
O blest departed one!
Whose all of life, a rosy ray,
Blushed into dawn and passed away.

Yes! thou art fled, ere guilt had power
To stain thy cherub soul and form,
Closed is the soft ephemeral flower
That never felt a storm!
[illegible] sunbeam's smile, the zephyr's breath,
[illegible]hat it knew from birth to death.

Thou wert so like a form of light,
That heaven benignly called thee hence,
Ere yet the world could breathe one blight
O'er thy sweet innocence:
And thou, that brighter home to bless,
Art passed, with all thy loveliness.

Oh! hadst thou still on earth remained,
Vision of beauty, fair as brief!
How soon thy brightness had been stained
With passion or with grief!
Now, not a sullying breath can rise
To dim thy glory in the skies.

We rear no marble o'er thy tomb—
No sculptured image there shall mourn:
Ah! fitter far the vernal bloom
Such dwelling to adorn.
Fragrance and flowers and dews must be
The only emblems meet for thee.

Thy grave shall be a blessèd shrine,
Adorned with Nature's brightest wreath;
Each glowing season shall combine
Its incense there to breathe;
And oft, upon the midnight air,
Shall viewless harps be murmuring there.

And oh! sometimes in visions blest,
Sweet spirit! visit our repose;
And bear, from thine own world of rest,
Some balm for human woes!
What form more lovely could be given
Than thine to messenger of heaven?

THE PENITENT'S OFFERING

ST LUKE, VII. 37-9.

THOU that with pallid cheek,
And eyes in sadness meek,
And faded locks that humbly swept the ground,
From thy long wanderings won,
Before the all-healing Son,
Didst bow thee to the earth—O lost and found!

When thou wouldst bathe his feet
With odours richly sweet,
And many a shower of woman's burning tear,
And dry them with that hair,
Brought low the dust to wear,
From the crowned beauty of its festal year;

Did he reject thee then,
While the sharp scorn of men
On thy once bright and stately head was cast?
No! from the Saviour's mien,
A solemn light serene
Bore to thy soul the peace of God at last.

For thee, their smiles no more
Familiar faces wore;
Voices, once kind, had learned the stranger's tone:
Who raised thee up, and bound
Thy silent spirit's wound?—
He, from all guilt the stainless, He alone!

But which, O erring child,
From home so long beguiled!—
Which of thine offerings won those words of heaven,
That o'er the bruised reed,
Condemned of earth to bleed,
In music passed, "Thy sins are all forgiven?"

Was it that perfume, fraught
With balm and incense, brought
From the sweet woods of Araby the Blest?
Or that fast-flowing rain
Of tears, which not in vain,
To him who scorned not tears, thy woes confessed?

No! not by these restored
Unto thy Father's board,
Thy peace, that kindled joy in heaven, was made;
But, costlier in his eyes,
By that blest sacrifice,
Thy heart, thy full deep heart, before him laid.

DESPONDENCY AND ASPIRATION

"Per correr miglior acque alza le vele,
Omai la navicella del mio Intelletto."—DANTE.

My soul was mantled with dark shadows, born
Of lonely Fear, disquieted in vain;
Its phantoms hung around the star of morn,
A cloud-like weeping train:
Thro' the long day they dimmed the autumn gold
On all the glistening leaves, and wildly rolled,
When the last farewell flush of light was glowing,
Across the sunset sky,
O'er its rich isles of vaporous glory throwing
One melancholy dye.
And when the solemn night
Came rushing with her might
Of stormy oracles from caves unknown,
Then with each fitful blast
Prophetic murmurs passed,
Wakening or answering some deep Sybil-tone
Far buried in my breast, yet prompt to rise
With every gusty wail that o'er the wind-harp flies.

" Fold, fold thy wings," they cried, " and strive no more—
Faint spirit ! strive no more : for thee too strong
Are outward ill and wrong,
And inward wasting fires ! Thou canst not soar
Free on a starry way,
Beyond their blighting sway,
At heaven's high gate serenely to adore.
How shouldst *thou* hope earth's fetters to unbind ?
O passionate, yet weak ! O trembler to the wind !

" Never shall aught but broken music flow
From joy of thine, deep love, or tearful woe—
Such homeless notes as through the forest sigh,
From the reed's hollow shaken,
When sudden breezes waken
Their vague, wild symphony.
No power is theirs, and no abiding-place
In human hearts ; their sweetness leaves no trace—
Born only so to die !
Never shall aught but perfume faint and vain,
On the fleet pinion of the changeful hour,
From thy bruised life again
A moment's essence breathe ;
Thy life, whose trampled flower,
Into the blessed wreath
Of household-charities no longer bound,
Lies pale and withering on the barren ground.

" So fade, fade on ! Thy gift of love shall cling
A coiling sadness round thy heart and brain—
A silent fruitless yet undying thing,
All sensitive to pain !
And still the shadow of vain dreams shall fall

O'er thy mind's world, a daily darkening pall.
Fold, then, thy wounded wing, and sink subdued
In cold and unrepining quietude!"

Then my soul yielded: spells of numbing breath
Crept o'er it heavy with a dew of death—
Its powers like leaves before the night-rain closing;
And, as by conflict of wild sea-waves tossed
On the chill bosom of some desert coast,
Mutely and hopelessly I lay reposing.
When silently it seemed
As if a soft mist gleamed
Before my passive sight, and slowly curling,
To many a shape and hue
Of visioned beauty grew,
Like a wrought banner, fold by fold unfurling.

Oh! the rich scenes that o'er mine inward eye
Unrolling then swept by
With dreamy motion! Silvery seas were there,
Lit by large dazzling stars, and arched by skies
Of southern midnight's most transparent dyes;
And gemmed with many an island, wildly fair,
Which floated past me into orient day,
Still gathering lustre on the illumined way,
Till its high groves of wondrous flowering-trees
Coloured the silvery seas.
And then a glorious mountain-chain uprose,
[illegible] above spiry height!
[illegible]itude of woods and snows,
[illegible]ed in golden light!
[illegible]ssed, those regal peaks unveiling,
[illegible]ought, a waving of dread wings,

And mighty sounds, as if the vision hailing,
From lyres that quivered through ten thousand strings:
Or as if waters, forth to music leaping
From many a cave, the Alpine echo's hall,
On their bold way victoriously were sweeping,
Linked in majestic anthems!—while through all
That billowy swell and fall,
Voices, like ringing crystal, filled the air
With inarticulate melody, that stirred
My being's core; then, moulding into word
Their piercing sweetness, bade me rise, and bear
In that great choral strain my trembling part,
Of tones by love and faith struck from a human heart.

Return no more, vain bodings of the night!
A happier oracle within my soul
Hath swelled to power; a clear unwavering light
Mounts through the battling clouds that round me roll;
And to a new control
Nature's full harp gives forth rejoicing tones,
Wherein my glad sense owns
The accordant rush of elemental sound
To one consummate harmony profound—
One grand Creation-Hymn,
Whose notes the seraphim
Lift to the glorious height of music winged and crowned.
Shall not those notes find echoes in my lyre,
Faithful though faint? Shall not my spirit's fire,
If slowly, yet unswervingly, ascend
Now to its fount and end?
Shall not my earthly love, all purified,
Shine forth a heavenward guide,
An angel of bright power—and strongly bear

My being upward into holier air,
Where fiery passion-clouds have no abode,
And the sky's temple-arch o'erflows with God?

The radiant hope new-born
Expands like rising morn
In my life's life: and as a ripening rose
The crimson shadow of its glory throws
More vivid, hour by hour, on some pure stream;
So from that hope are spreading
Rich hues, o'er nature shedding
Each day a clearer, spiritual gleam.

Let not those rays fade from me! Once enjoyed,
Father of Spirits! let them not depart—
Leaving the chilled earth without form and void,
Darkened by mine own heart!
Lift, aid, sustain me? Thou, by whom alone
All lovely gifts and pure
In the soul's grasp endure;
Thou, to the steps of whose eternal throne
All knowledge flows—a sea for evermore
Breaking its crested waves on that sole shore—
Oh, consecrate my life! that I may sing
Of thee with joy that hath a living spring,
In a full heart of music! Let my lays
Through the resounding mountains waft thy praise,
And with that theme the wood's green cloisters fill,
And make their quivering leafy dimness thrill
To the rich breeze of song! Oh! let me wake
The deep religion, which hath dwelt from yore
Silently brooding by lone cliff and lake,
And wildest river-shore!

And let me summon all the voices dwelling
Where eagles build, and caverned rills are welling,
And where the cataract's organ-peal is swelling,
In that one spirit gathered to adore!

Forgive, O Father! if presumptuous thought
Too daringly in aspiration rise!
Let not thy child all vainly have been taught
By weakness, and by wanderings, and by sighs
Of sad confession! lowly be my heart,
And on its penitential altar spread
The offerings worthless, till thy grace impart
The fire from heaven, whose touch alone can shed
Life, radiance, virtue!—let that vital spark
Pierce my whole being, wildered else and dark!
Thine are all holy things—oh, make me thine!
So shall I, too, be pure—a living shrine
Unto that Spirit which goes forth from thee,
Strong and divinely free,
Bearing thy gifts of wisdom on its flight,
And brooding o'er them with a dove-like wing,
Till thought, word, song, to thee in worship spring,
Immortally endowed for liberty and light.

TRANSLATIONS

FROM CORNELIO BENTIVOGLIO

"L'anima bella, che dal vero Eliso."

THE sainted spirit which, from bliss on high,
Descends like dayspring to my favoured sight,
Shines in such noontide radiance of the sky,
Scarce do I know that form, intensely bright.
But with the sweetness of her well-known smile,
That smile of peace! she bids my doubts depart,
And takes my hand, and softly speaks the while,
And heaven's full glory pictures to my heart.
Beams of that heaven in her my eyes behold,
And now, even now, in thought my wings unfold,
To soar with her, and mingle with the blest!
But ah! so swift her buoyant pinion flies,
That I, in vain aspiring to the skies,
Fall to my native sphere, by earthly bonds deprest.

FROM JUAN DE TARSIS

"Tu, que la dulce vida en tiernas anos."

THOU, who hast fled from life's enchanted bowers,
In youth's gay spring, in beauty's glowing morn,
Leaving thy bright array, thy path of flowers,
For the rude convent-garb and couch of thorn;
Thou that, escaping from a world of cares,
Hast found thy haven in devotion's fane,
As to the port the fearful bark repairs
To shun the midnight perils of the main—
Now the glad hymn, the strain of rapture pour,
While on thy soul the beams of glory rise!
For if the pilot hail the welcome shore
With shouts of triumph swelling to the skies,
Oh! how shouldst thou the exulting pæan raise,
Now heaven's bright harbour opens on thy gaze!

FROM PETRARCH

"Chi vuol veder quantumque può natura."

THOU that wouldst mark, in form of human birth,
All heaven and nature's perfect skill combined,
Come gaze on her, the day-star of the earth,
Dazzling, not me alone, but all mankind:
And haste! for Death, who spares the guilty long,
First calls the brightest and the best away;
And to her home, amidst the cherub throng,
The angelic mortal flies, and will not stay.
Haste! and each outward charm, each mental grace,
In one consummate form thine eye shall trace,
Model of loveliness, for earth too fair!
Then thou shalt own how faint my votive lays,
My spirit dazzled by perfection's blaze:
But if thou still delay, for long regret prepare.

FROM LOPE DE VEGA

"Estese el cortesano."

LET the vain courtier waste his days,
Lured by the charms that wealth displays,
The couch of down, the board of costly fare;
Be his to kiss the ungrateful hand
That waves the sceptre of command,
And rear full many a palace in the air;
Whilst I enjoy, all unconfined,
The glowing sun, the genial wind,
And tranquil hours, to rustic toil assigned;
And prize far more, in peace and health,
Contented indigence than joyless wealth.

Not mine in Fortune's fane to bend,
At Grandeur's altar to attend,
Reflect his smile, and tremble at his frown;
Nor mine a fond aspiring thought,
A wish, a sigh, a vision fraught
With Fame's bright phantom, Glory's deathless crown!
Nectarous draughts and viands pure
Luxuriant nature will insure;
These the clear fount and fertile field
Still to the wearied shepherd yield;
And when repose and visions reign,
Then we are equals all, the monarch and the swain.

FROM METASTASIO

I

"Dunque si sfoga in pianto."

In tears the heart oppressed with grief
  Gives language to its woes;
In tears its fulness finds relief,
  When rapture's tide o'erflows.

Who, then, unclouded bliss would seek
  On this terrestrial sphere;
When even delight can only speak,
  Like sorrow—in a tear?

II

"Al furor d' avversa Sorte."

He shall not dread Misfortune's angry mien,
  Nor feebly sink beneath her tempest rude,
Whose soul hath learned, thro' many a trying scene,
  To smile at fate and suffer unsubdued.

In the rough school of billows, clouds, and storms,
  Nursed and matured, the pilot learns his art:
Thus Fate's dread ire, by many a conflict, forms
  The lofty spirit and enduring heart.

III

"Quella onda che ruina."

The torrent wave that breaks with force
Impetuous down the Alpine height,
Complains and struggles in its course,
But sparkles, as the diamond bright.

The stream in shadowy valley deep
May slumber in its narrow bed;
But silent, in unbroken sleep,
Its lustre and its life are fled.

FROM PIETRO BEMBO

"O Muerte! que suelen ser."

Thou, the stern monarch of dismay,
Whom nature trembles to survey,
O Death! to me, the child of grief,
Thy welcome power would bring relief,
Changing to peaceful slumber many a care.
And though thy stroke may thrill with pain
Each throbbing pulse, each quivering vein;
The pangs that bid existence close,
Ah! sure are far less keen than those
Which cloud its lingering moments with despair.

FROM CAMOENS

I

FROM PSALM CXXXVII.

WRAPT in sad musings, by Euphrates' stream
I sat, retracing days for ever flown,
While rose thine image on the exile's dream,
O much-loved Salem! and thy glories gone:
When they who caused the ceaseless tears I shed,
Thus to their captive spoke—"Why sleep thy lays?
Sing of thy treasures lost, thy splendour fled,
And all thy triumphs in departed days.
Know'st thou not Harmony's resistless charm
Can soothe each passion, and each grief disarm?
Sing then, and tears will vanish from thine eye."
With sighs I answered,—"When the cup of woe
Is filled till misery's bitter draught o'erflow,
The mourner's cure is not to sing—but die."

II

FROM PSALM CXXXVII

BESIDE the streams of Babylon, in tears
Of vain desire, we sat; remembering thee,
O hallowed Sion! and the vanished years,
When Israel's chosen sons were blest and free.
Our harps, neglected and untuned, we hung
Mute on the willows of the stranger's land;
When songs, like those that in thy fanes we sung,
Our foes demanded from their captive band.
"How shall our voices, on a foreign shore,"
(We answered those whose chains the exile wore),
"The songs of God, our sacred songs, renew?
If I forget, midst grief and wasting toil,
Thee, O Jerusalem! my native soil!
May my right hand forget its cunning too."

III

TO A LADY WHO DIED AT SEA

THOU to whose power my hopes, my joys I gave,
O fondly loved! my bosom's dearest care!
Earth, which denied to lend thy form a grave,
Yields not one spell to soothe my deep despair.
Yes! the wild seas entomb those charms divine,
Dark o'er thy head the eternal billows roll;
But while one ray of life or thought is mine,
Still shalt thou live, the inmate of my soul.
And if the tones of my uncultured song
Have power the sad remembrance to prolong
Of love so ardent, and of faith so pure;
Still shall my verse thine epitaph remain,
Still shall thy charms be deathless in my strain,
While Time and Love and Memory shall endure.

IV

"Alma minha gentil, que te partiste."

SPIRIT beloved! whose wing so soon hath flown
The joyless precincts of this earthly sphere,
How is yon heaven eternally thine own,
Whilst I deplore thy loss, a captive here!
Oh! if allowed in thy divine abode
Of aught on earth an image to retain,
Remember still the fervent love which glowed
In my fond bosom, pure from every stain.
And if thou deemed that all my faithful grief,
Caused by thy loss, and hopeless of relief,
Can merit thee, sweet native of the skies!
Oh! ask of heaven, which called thee soon away,
That I may join thee in those realms of day,
Swiftly as thou hast vanished from mine eyes.

V

"Si la memoria de mi amor alcanza."

If in thy glorious home above
Thou still recallest earthly love,
If yet retained a thought may be
Of him whose heart hath bled for thee;

Remember still how deeply shrined
Thine image in his joyless mind:
Each well-known scene, each former care,
Forgotten—thou alone art there!

Remember that thine eye-beam's light
Hath fled for ever from his sight,
And, with that vanished sunshine, lost
Is every hope he cherished most.

Think that his life, from thee apart,
Is all but weariness of heart;
Each stream, whose music once was dear,
Now murmurs discord to his ear.

Through thee, the morn, whose cloudless rays
Woke him to joy in other days,
Now, in the light of beauty drest,
Brings but new sorrows to his breast.

Through thee, the heavens are dark to him,
The sun's meridian blaze is dim;
And harsh were even the bird of eve,
But that her song still loves to grieve.

All it hath been his heart forgets,
So altered by its long regrets;
Each wish is changed, each hope is o'er,
And joy's light spirit wakes no more.

FROM SANNAZARO

Oh! pure and blessèd soul,
That, from thy clay's control
Escaped, hast sought and found thy native sphere
And from thy crystal throne
Look'st down, with smiles alone,
On this vain scene of mortal hope and fear;

Thy happy feet have trod
The starry spangled road,
Celestial flocks by field and fountain guiding;
And from their erring track
Thou charm'st thy sheep herds back,
With the soft music of thy gentle chiding.

Oh! who shall Death withstand—
Death, whose impartial hand
Levels the lowest plant and loftiest pine?
When shall our ears again
Drink in so sweet a strain,
Our eyes behold so fair a form as thine?

FROM GARCILASO DE LA VEGA

Divine Eliza!—since the sapphire sky
Thou measur'st now on angel wings, and feet
Sandalled with immortality—oh, why
Of me forgetful? Wherefore not entreat
To hurry on the time when I shall see
The veil of mortal being rent in twain,
And smile that I am free?

In the third circle of that happy land,
Shall we not seek together, hand in hand,
Another lovelier landscape, a new plain,
Other romantic streams and mountains blue,
And other vales, and a new shady shore,
Where I may rest, and ever in my view
Keep thee, without the terror and surprise
Of being sundered more?

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